The Julio-Claudian Succession

REALITY AND PERCEPTION OF THE "AUGUSTAN MODEL"

MNEMOSYNE SUPPLEMENTS HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

Edited by

A.G.G. GIBSON

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The Julio-Claudian Succession

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INTRODUCTION

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The term 'succession' is appended with great ease by historians and commentators to the transition of power from one political incumbent to the next. The word carries a symbolism which suggests that the transfer will be seamless, as much the result of painstaking planning as reading the omens in the political wind. Upper levels of management in public companies, totalitarian regimes, constitutional monarchies to name just a few, all employ management doubletalk to explain their "succession planning". Across the long twentieth century to date, the business of monarchy is passed from parent to offspring without missing a beat, and the success of that transfer can be measured by newspaper column inches or the number of rolling news inserts. The Augustan succession has, by its nature, necessitated a great deal of analysis and with the lack of a template or legal framework extant in first century Rome, it has not been easy for scholars to establish a secure picture. It is sometimes easier to see what it isn't rather than what it is. This collection of essays examines particular aspects of the imperial succession in the early first century as it worked its way between the heirs of Augustus.

Kingship

Because of the unpopularity in Rome of anything that looked remotely like the rule of the kings, Augustus and his successors faced the potentially awkward hurdle of how to make any succession look non-hereditary and therefore non-monarchical. The removal from power of the last king of Rome, L. Tarquinius Superbus, by L. Iunius Brutus in 509 BC and the establishment of a government in Rome, acted as a warning to any of those who followed and harboured the ambition to rule alone. After the death of Caesar the destruction wrought by a civil war driven by individual rivalries between members of the Roman elite, meant that absolute monarchy was going to be a difficult act to sell to the citizenry. Livy's *Ab Conde Urbita Libri* tells of the history of the city from the new freedom gained by the Roman people after

the overthrow of the oppressive Tarquinius, their achievements in war and peace, the new annual magistracies, and that the law was now above all men.[1] These were themes that would remain at the forefront of Augustus' mind.

Livy (59 BC–AD 17) knew Augustus, and his history of Rome would provide a perspective that shone benevolently on the establishment of the Republic. Although Livy was not a mouthpiece for Augustus, the publication of an extensive history of Rome in 142 books, and one that reflected a decline in moral standards in Rome (at least until 9 BC) would do the latter no harm. Augustus would prove to be the man to remedy such a decline and he set out to found the city of Rome for a second time.

Augustus could look for exempla (either useful or something to avoid) among Alexander's successors and the subsequent dynasties of the Hellenistic kings. Van Bremen explains that in Hellenistic royal families the public, political and private spheres all overlap, where "power and authority are vested in the person of the king, indirectly to his wife and children. Monarchical succession is based on successful producing of offspring, and alliances are forged and reforged through marriages".[2] The east had already provided an example for Augustus of how titles could be used as a positive mark or symbol of power and influence. Millar explains that "*Imperator*, Saviour, Benefactor, Founder of the City" found on dedications from Mytilene that describe Pompey the Great, "are expressions that did no more than reflect the long-established custom of applying to Roman commanders the honorific and semi-divine appellations of Hellenistic kings".[3] Augustus' adoption of the title *imperator* is discussed below.

A Hellenistic king followed certain philosophical traits and his 'perfect virtue' should be there for all to see. By his actions the king should make his subjects love him; he should use his wealth wisely and own a palace and servants to match his status but not live in excess; he needed to administer moderation, self-control and dispense justice that followed the 'divine

[1] Liberi iam hinc populi Romani res pace belloque gestas, annuos magistratus, imperiaque legum potentiora quam hominum peragam. Quae libertas ut laetior esset proximi regis superbia fecerat. Nam priores ita regnarunt ut haud immerito omnes deinceps conditores partium certe urbis, quas nouas ipsi sedes ab se auctae multitudinis addiderunt, numerentur; neque ambigitur quin Brutus idem qui tantum gloriae superbo exacto rege meruit pessimo publico id facturus fuerit, si libertatis immaturae cupidine priorum regum alicui regnum extorsisset. Livy 2.1–3.

[2] Cf. Van Bremen (2005) 313–330; also Ma (2005) 177–195.

[3] Millar (1992) 611.

harmony of things'.[4] Green offers an excellent summary of the needs of Hellenistic kingship established in the wake of the campaigns of Philip II and subsequently Alexander.

> The Macedonian monarchy had retained numerous archaic, even Homeric traits: the prestige of the triumphant warrior; the symbolic use of the diadem, the royal robe, and the seal ring; personal command in war; a group of privileged and, most often, aristocratic Companions, or friends (*hetairoi*, *philoi*), in battle, at dinner, to give advice as a royal council; the right to distribute booty (and control looting); the duty, in general, of being what Homer called the "shepherd of the people," handing out gifts and charitable patronage, winning renown as a fighter and hunter, and through philanthropic generosity and cultural enhancement.[5]

There may be elements in Green's assessment that would be attractive to Augustus but at the outset he was facing a different set of problems to the Διάδοχοι. Augustus, and Rome, had come through a civil war and power had been in the hands of an oligarchic body; he needed to wrest control from them and bind the broken pieces of the Republic together to shape the empire. Then again, the heirs of Augustus would probably recognize the challenges facing the Διάδοχοι, where a key issue was how to establish their own rule when they were not Alexander, or for the Julio-Claudians, Augustus?

Conspiracies

Augustus' careful stage management of just about every aspect of his rule as *princeps*, occluded how he really held the reins of empire. The citizens were dazzled by the excessive commissioning of architecture and monumental sculpture, the panegyrical literature, the heavy promotion of his family and friends. All these factors combined would place Augustus physically and metaphorically at the political heart of empire. However, as a ruler it becomes apparent that one of the elements needed to ensure your very survival is to have a successor lined up to block-off the opportunity for usurpers to take your place. An heir can be an equally dangerous threat if they are impatient for power, but it is usually less problematic to defend oneself against a known foe than an unknown one. Augustus would suffer

4 For the government/administration of Alexander's successors see Green (1990) 187–200, see 190.

5 Green (1990) 190.

from several plots against him throughout his reign. Suet. *Aug.* 19 gives a list of the different conspiracies, including one in 9 BC where unnamed plotters were punished by Augustus around the time of the death of Tiberius' brother, Drusus (Dio Cass. 55.4.4). There was also a plot attributed to Publius Rufus (Dio Cass. 55.27.1–5);[6] the city had been suffering from losses of property and food due to fires and had openly talked of a revolution; although Publius Rufus was credited with organising these plans, Dio states that in reality the ringleaders were hiding behind Rufus' name. Suetonius records a number of conspiracies and potential revolts that were betrayed and so Augustus extinguished the latent opposition. They were led by the following: Lepidus the younger; Varro Murena and Fannius Caepio; Marcus Egnatius; Plautius Rufus; Lucius Paulus; Lucius Audasius; Asinius Epicadus; and finally Telephus. The last mentioned was a slave and this allowed Suetonius to comment that "even men of the lowest condition conspired against him and imperilled his safety".[7] It is most likely that Telephus would be doing someone else's bidding, but all the aforementioned plotters against Augustus, were punished or politically marginalised. A recurring theme is that the real danger to the *princeps* seems to have remained hidden, with unnamed shadowy figures working behind subterfuge and court intrigue. Claudius would suffer from the same unsubstantiated accusations when Gaius (Caligula) was murdered.

The Transfer of Power: Syria

The death of a long-term leader, and a man who might be titled *pater patriae*, can be a political tinderbox. A totalitarian regime can have the resilience to withstand a power vacuum, such as after the death of Stalin or al-Assad, but it can also fall at such a juncture because of the aims and objectives of determined individuals. In the last thirty years we have seen the citizenry rising up against autocratic leaderships; examples would be the fall of the Communist government of Nicolae Ceauşescu in Romania, and the bloody civil war that ended Muammar Gadaffi's Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya regime. There is not space here to analyse the labyrinthine web of coups and counter revolution (dating from 1949) which eventually brought General Hafiz al-Assad to power in Syria as a result of the Corrective Revolution of 1970. However, the transition of power

6 Generally thought to be the same as Suetonius Plautius Rufus—see Swan (2004) 184.
7 Suet. *Aug.* 19.1.

after the death of Hafiz al-Assad in 2000 to his son, Bashar al-Assad, is worth consideration.

There are probably as many dissimilarities as there are similarities between the Roman imperial rule of the first century to the twentieth century Syrian government of the al-Assad's, but in terms of this project the ruling families of Augustus and Hafiz al-Assad faced the same basic problems: how to retain power, and how to ensure a smooth succession and prevent civil war, insurrection or usurpation.

As was the case in first century Rome, the grip on power for al-Assad's successor needed to span three levers: firstly, maintaining the support of the army (achieved by embarking on a military career); secondly, strategically placing the successor in the public eye to curry favour with the populace; and thirdly, for the heir to gain experience of government office. For the Julio-Claudians who followed on from Augustus, the succession was marked by continual setbacks (see Osgood). Tiberius had a first rate military career with his brother Drusus and the legions in Germania, campaigning in the Alpine regions and suppressing revolts in Illyria and Pannonia. Even though he was overlooked as Augustus' heir for the adopted sons, Gaius and Lucius, nonetheless he would have the requisite experience when the time came. When Gaius and Lucius assumed the *toga virilis* in 5 and 2 BC respectively, they were recognised as *princeps iuventutis* by the *equites*, admitted to the Senate and nominated to be consul. Later, Gaius would be sent out to the east with the powers of a proconsul and he gained military and diplomatic experience in Parthia and Armenia. As a consequence of being sent out on campaign, Gaius would succumb in AD 4 to wounds received at Artagira (in Armenia) and Lucius would die en route to Spain at Massalia (Marseille) in AD 2. These events reopened the problem for Augustus of nominating a credible and vigorous successor. Tiberius would be much older when he became heir apparent at the age of forty-six which required different handling and so he was given the powers of a tribune for ten years and granted proconsular *imperium* equal to that of Augustus (see Osgood and Seager). Tiberius' heir, Germanicus, died in AD 19 and it was the latter's surviving son, Gaius, who would become heir alongside Tiberius Gemellus in AD 31. Gaius' only experience of public office was as a quaestor and as *pontifex*. Claudius was not marked as an heir (see Gibson) and so had none of the seemingly required civic and military qualities when he assumed the offices of the *princeps*. Nero was to be groomed as successor by Claudius, albeit at the behest of Agrippina (II), and consequently when he received the *toga virilis* the adopted Nero was afforded the same titles and privileges as Gaius and Lucius. However Nero would lack the military leadership that

would normally be so beneficial to gaining the *auctoritas* required in a leader.

Bashar al-Assad was chosen as al-Assad's successor after the death of his elder brother Bassel al-Assad and so, under the watchful gaze of his father, he would embark upon bolstering the essential areas required to establish his political standing (and, in effect, the legitimate claim) of an heir. Bashar enlisted in the army, was promoted to the rank of colonel, and in a civilian capacity he held administrative posts and was elected to the Syrian faction of the Baʾath Arab Socialist Party, the controlling political entity in Syria. By amending the eligibility rules, Bashar would become the sole Chairman of the Baʾath Arab Socialist Party, tighten his political control and his army rank would become that of a Lieutenant General.

Gaining power is one thing; holding it, of course, is another matter. Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius and Nero all suffered from internal revolts or conspiracies which were ruthlessly suppressed by force. In 2011–2012, the military response to the revolts inside Syria, in the cities of Homs, Idlib and Aleppo, has been no less brutal.

The Right tria nomina

Augustus' careful choice of the title of *princeps*, demonstrated he was going to avoid drawing attention to what would be the rule of one man. *Princeps* was not an official title that was conferred on an individual by the Senate, nor was it the same as the *princeps senatus*, who was the senior member of the Senate and placed on the Senate roll by the censors (Livy. 27.11; 33.44). The *princeps senatus* had Republican connotations and it is notable that Augustus also enrolled himself in the position (*RG*. 7) and that his successors would follow this example. A precedent had already been set in the days of the republic where *princeps* was used in relation to prominent statesman (for example Cic. *Att*. 1.13; *Mil*. 8), with the use of *principes* referring to the 'leading men of the state' (Cic. *Ver*. 1.1.55; *RG*. 12).[8]

In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus would set out what his choice of the term *princeps* would mean in practice, or at least how he wanted to be situated in relation to the new constitution. The final sentence of RG. 34 shows he would be, in effect, a *primus inter pares* but the reality would be very different as the principate took hold in the empire.

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[8] The term *princeps civitatus* or *principes civitatis* was similarly also used, Cic. *Cat*. 1.3; *Phil*. 1.1.

> In consulatu sexto et septimo, postquam bella ubi civilia exstinxeram, per consensum universorum potitus rerum omnium, rem publicam ex mea potestate in senatus populique Romani arbitrium transtuli. Quo pro merito meo senatus consulto Augustus appellatus sum et laureis postes aedium mearum vestiti publice coronaque civica super ianuam meam fixa est clupeus aureus in curia Iuliu positus, quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiaeque et iustitiae pietatis caussa testatum est per eius clupei inscriptionem. Post id tempus auctoritate omnibus praestiti, potestatis autem nihilo amplius habui quam ceteri qui mihi quoque in magistratu conlegae fuerunt.

> In my sixth and seventh consulships, when I had extinguished the flames of civil war, after receiving by universal consent the absolute control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my own control to the will of the Senate and the Roman people. For this service on my part I was given the title of Augustus by decree of the Senate, and the doorposts of my house were covered with laurels by public act, and a civic crown was fixed above my door, and a golden shield was placed in the Curia Julia whose inscription testified that the Senate and the Roman people gave me this in recognition of my valour, my clemency, my justice, and my piety. After that time I took precedence of all in rank, but of power I possessed no more than those who were my colleagues in any magistracy. (*RG*. 34 trans. F.W. Shipley).

The use of *princeps* removes any hint of Dictatorship, avoids *dominatus* with its meaning of absolute rule and monarchy rather than just command (Cic. *Rep*. 1.27; Caes. *Civ*. 1.4.), and *dominatio* which could mean unrestricted power and dominion is kept at arms length.[9] Tacitus. *Ann*. 1.1 uses both *dominatio* and *princeps* in the introduction of the *Annals*, but there is not room here to discuss the ramifications of Tacitus' views and choice of words and so only the briefest of comments will follow. Tacitus picks out Cinna and Sulla for *dominatio*, and Pompey and Crassus were bowed by Caesar while Lepidus and Antony were defeated by Augustus who subjected the war weary Rome to empire under the title of *princeps*:

> non Cinnae, non Sullae longa dominatio; et Pompei Crassique potentia cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere, qui cuncta discordiis civilibus fessa nomine principis sub imperium accepit.[10]

Presenting a suitable successor such as Tiberius or Germanicus will act as a symbol that the transition of power is a 'done deal', especially if one faces

[9] Tac. *Ann*.1.3 states that to support his absolutism, Augustus appointed Claudius Marcellus as curule aedile and *pontifex*. *Ceterum Augustus subsidia dominationi Claudium Marcellum sororis filium admodum adulescentem pontificatu et curuli aedilitate*; also see Sal. *Jug*. 31.16, 20.

[10] Tac. *Ann*. 1.1.

revolutionary pressure for political change that could drive a country to civil war. However, for a new *princeps*, retaining a grip on power can require significant military force to suppress any subsequent civilian or military revolt or prevent the unwelcome (for the ruler at least) fracturing of the political body along regional or ethnic divisions.

After Actium, the Roman commonwealth would move from under the auspices of the consuls and the Senate to the control of one man. The extent of this political and administrative control, both in appearance and reality will be explored further in these essays. Through the machinations of Augustus and the collusion of the oligarchs in the Senate, the Republic metamorphosed from the government of the many to, in all but name, a government of one. No matter how much energy and money was spent trying to promote an alternative, the Republic slid under the direct control of Augustus. He used a complex web of changes over time; even demanding that the Senate ratify a change of *praenomen* to *imperator*, a military title used by the legions to acclaim a general. The former Gaius Octavius (adopted through the will of Julius Caesar) took the name Augustus in 27 BC. The practice of adopting a *cognomen* as a *praenomen*, for example, became commonplace in the competition between the elite for power. Syme's exposition gives a detailed examination of the transmutation of names with particular regard to understanding Augustus' carefully chosen *tria nomina* of Imperator Caesar Augustus.[11] The acclamation of *imperator* was normally a symbol of a military victory and connected the recipient to prestige and its manifestation of a triumph at Rome. In the east it was shorthand for military and ruling power much more than the constitutionally correct term of consul. In the civil war the generals from both sides, except M. Porcius Cato, took the appellation 'imp.', but as Syme points out "not all of them could properly assert a right to legal authority; and it is fair to suppose that 'imp.' could derive not so much from a victory as from an act of usurpation; that it could represent not merely a claim to a triumph one day as a title of authority and command",[12] but that there would be no limit to the usurpation of title. If one considers Augustus' use of *imperator* as a retort to his rival Pompey's use of Magnus (Pompeius Pius) as a *praenomen*, then Syme's conclusion can be attractive: "Regarded as a personal name, 'Imp.' is exorbitant, far

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11 Syme, (1958) 172–188. One example is from 43 BC where Cicero mentions Sextus Pompeius Gnaei filius Magnus but this is transformed in a draft of a *senatus consultum* to Magnus Pompeius Gnaei filius where 'Magnus' becomes the *praenomen*, cf. 174.

12 Syme (1958) 80.

outdistancing any predecessor or competitor. So is Caesar's heir. 'Imp.' is a name of power, precise yet mystical, a monopolisation of the glory of the *triumphator*, but it is not a title of authority".[13] What is of note is that the contraction Imp. Caesar could only refer to one man.

In 27 BC the Senate decreed that Octavian should be awarded the *cognomen* Augustus, and was the first step of the rebranding of Caesar's heir. This is not the adoption of a fancy *cognomen* but a complete revamp of title from C. Julius C. f. Caesar to Imp. Caesar Divi f. Augustus.[14] The *cognomen* of Augustus becomes synonymous with the figure of Augustus, and his heirs would come to use it through custom; a symbol of the *princeps* signifying a direct line to their most illustrious ancestor and/or the second founder of Rome. As part of Augustus' will, Tiberius was given Augustus' name, and he became Tiberius Iulius Caesar Augustus.[15] Gaius used C. Caesar Aug. Germanicus (*BMRC* vol. 1, 38) and Claudius (really Ti. Claudio Drusi German. f. Neroni Germanico, *ILS* 198) who was not a member of the Iulii, but the Claudii, adopted the name Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus (*BMRC* vol. 1, 116, 149.) on his accession in AD 41. By AD 42 Claudius would begin to assert his own identity when his titles would become Ti. Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (*BMRC* vol. 1, 215) by the reintroduction of his father Drusus' honorific *agnomen*, and brother's *praenomen*, Germanicus.

Background

Since Strocka's 1994 collection of essays, *Die Regierungszeit des Kaisers Claudius (41–54 n. Chr.). Umbruch oder Episode?* there have been relatively few attempts to draw out the continuities and disjunctions between different members of the Julio-Claudian imperial family, both in their political practice and, more importantly for this project, their representation.[16] Survey analyses do exist—Andrew Wallace Hadrill and Matthew Roller have considered the life of the court under the Julio-Claudians,[17] however there is not room here to analyse the numerous individual articles that have been produced on varying topics relevant to the period.

There have also been studies of the individual emperors in question by scholars over the past century—from in-depth scholarly biographies by

13 Syme (1958) 182.
14 Syme (1958) 187.
15 Seager (2005) 217–218.
16 Strocka (1994).
17 Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 283–308. Roller (2001).

Seager, Barrett, Levick, Champlin and Griffin, to more wide-ranging political examinations and comprehensive historiographical studies.[18] The collection offered here originated in a conference that explored the links between different patterns of representation of Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius and Nero across a wide variety of different contexts—ranging from textual and visual images sponsored by the emperors themselves through to the equally subjective rendering left to us in literature.[19] What is the relationship, if any, between the distortions that stem from propagandist inspiration, the satirical exposé, or just the plain misinterpretation of their sources by those who produce an imperial portrait? How does the self-image proffered by the emperor relate to his portrait drawn by another, and usually subsequent, commentator? One important element not represented in this collection is an examination of the Julio-Claudians in art and architecture.[20]

Augustus was the creator of a dynastic political system and he was retained within the superstructure of the imperial family, either through bloodline or politically through propaganda in art and architecture. Although Augustus may not quite be the political equivalent of the *deux ex machina*, one can make out a certain omnipresence as he overshadows (and shapes) every political juncture that was played out for subsequent decades. One could further open up the debate and challenge the boundaries and constitution of a "Julio-Claudian" identity as a whole. Is it not really an Augustan (neé Julian) dynasty? The emperors who followed were able to stand upright as their own men, but they were not free from the shadow of Augustus—even although it seems they all tried to escape from as well as exploit Augustus' radiant influence in some crude Faustian pact during their respective reigns.

18 For detailed bibliographies see Seager (2005) *Tiberius*^{2}; Levick (1999) *Tiberius the Politician*^{2}, (1993) *Claudius*, (1999) *Vespasian*: Barrett (1993) *Caligula*; Griffin (1987) *Nero*; Wellesley (2000) *The Year of the Four Emperors*^{3}; Jones (1992) *The Emperor Domitian*, and (1984) *The Emperor Titus*; also Champlin (2003) *Nero*. The latest biography is Osgood (2010) *Claudius Caesar*.

19 The conference was held at the University of St Andrews 18–20th June 2008. The conference organiser is very grateful for the generous support of the School of Classics and the Classical Association (CA), whose assistance played a significant part in the success of the event. The CA awarded graduate bursaries and so graduate students were able to contribute fully to the conference.

20 Rose (1997); Mattingly (2010).

Essays

The essays here are grouped in chronological order of the *princeps*' reigns therefore will run from Augustus' rise to power after Actium in 31 BC through to the end of Nero's principate in AD 68. Although this is an artificial device and eschews a thematic structure, it was chosen to allow for any development of imperial concepts to be revealed. Consequently, the reader can draw on any thematic congruencies to make their own novel or different connections.

Osgood explores Augustus' founding of the principate and the subsequent succession in "Suetonius and the Succession to Augustus". The paper tackles two distinct but related factors, firstly, Augustus' plans for the succession and secondly, Suetonius' treatment of the succession in *Divus Augustus*. Osgood argues that Suetonius' views are useful on two fronts. First, they give an insight into how the Romans themselves considered the succession; and second, he shows how "Augustus' approach to succession could be reconceived to supply a continuing precedent for the developing political culture of the principate". Osgood analyses other perspectives in order to help us gain an understanding of the events around the succession and looks into the debate between Syme and Gruen who put forward conflicting views. The essay gives a detailed exposition of the importance of Gaius and Lucius and considers a broad spectrum of physical evidence to create the narrative surrounding their postion as heirs. It concludes with the thought that the very lack of written plans for the succession may have created difficulties in AD 68, but ironically allowed his successors a certain amount of flexibility in how and what they claimed in relation to Augustus.

Seager's "Perceptions of the Domus Augusta A.D. 4–24" presents a sweeping examination of the *domus Augusta* from the rehabilitation of Tiberius as the only genuine successor and heir to Augustus to the problems caused by the death of Germanicus. Robin Seager collects the evidence and dissects it to explain how the imperial house was created through a series of political and pragmatic actions taken by Augustus and then by Tiberius as *princeps*.

The rehabilitation of Tiberius was necessary if he was to be the successor to Augustus, and chimed with the desire that the public image of the *domus* reflected continuity, durability and the definition of hierarchy as well as projecting unanimity inside and outside the *domus*. Seager explores evidence on the Arch of Ticinum, and examines Ovid's *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* arguing that they reflect the desire for a harmonious continuity. The representation

of Germanicus and Drusus in numismatic and epigraphic material is rightly deemed to be of equal importantance as the depiction by Tacitus. The paper concludes that the importance of the *domus* is a guarantor of principate. It provided continuity as well as secured internal harmony within the *domus* and the death of Germanicus does not dent Augustus' aim to make a son of Germanicus the ultimate successor.

"The Identity of Drusus: The Making of a *Princeps*" examines the veracity of Tacitus' accounts that Tiberius favoured his son Drusus as successor over his adopted son Germanicus, but that later Tiberius remained impartial. Jane Bellemore's essay examines both Tacitean versions and considers Drusus' status in the *domus Augusta*, and his "imperial prospects" before and after Augustus' death. Augustus selected Germanicus as heir, so Drusus was marginalised with no prospect of advancement. However, in AD 14 Tiberius sent Drusus to quell the revolt in Illyricum which enhanced Drusus' military standing and prospects. Bellemore concludes that Tacitus' account is reliable because once Tiberius had set his sons on an equal footing, he did not subsequently indicate a preference for his successor.

After the death of Augustus in AD 14 there was uncertainty in how the role of *princeps* would be filled by a new player. Augustus' successor would have to work in the shadow of the man who had painstakingly designed the restoration and refounding of Rome. Caroline Vout appraises how the literary and visual record managed the change from *princeps* to Principate in "Tiberius and the invention of succession". Tiberius has been accused of dissimulation, amongst many things, and Vout states that it is no wonder that he should be closely linked with 'seeming'. Not only has Tiberius 'to act like an emperor, but he has to look like an emperor' and he has to retain some semblance of himself and not disappear completely within the role Augustus had created. Augustus was 'authentic and indisputable' and, for Tiberius, his predecessor was still evident in building and statuary. Vout's essay examines how Tiberius reconciled these tensions and how he managed to survive in the shadow of Augustus. The image of a youthful Augustus on coins and statuary created iconographic difficulties for the middle-aged Tiberius. Any accusations of *dissimulatio* are easily raised but, as Vout maintains, we should not assume that the coin issues rigidly follow the literary record. Tiberius had little choice but to follow the pattern set by Augustus where tradition was paramount. He may have been unlike Augustus, but Tiberius had been shaped and moulded by Augustus (and Livia) and chose to conceal himself in the role—he would not threaten the principate and the empire. As Vout says, the occasional glimpse we get of Tiberius might have betrayed him and his choice to remain as *princeps*

even though dissimulation is important because 'Tiberius alerts us to the gap between image and reality'.

Roger Rees dissects the reception of the *Laus Pisonis* at the turn of the second century; a poem written in AD 39–40 with a subject of Gaius Calpurnius Piso, who was to become the unsuccessful conspirator against Nero in AD 65. While panegyrics have a shelf-life, once they have passed their sell-by-date it seems they were utilised as a historical source; however, the reliability and truthfulness of panegyrics were the subject of debate in the ancient world. This essay looks at the account of the conspiracy in *Annals* 15 in which, Rees argues, Tacitus corrects the earlier elaborate and vibrant description of Piso to produce a more sober and downbeat picture. Rees shows that Tacitus engages with the untrustworthy epideictic but in doing so accepts the premise that the necessary credentials for office (reputation and status) are essentially moral, rather than being based on financial or military backing. The essay allows a glimpse of how individuals can ebb and flow within the court, and how conspirators can be seen, by their contemporaries and be (re)interpreted by those following on behind. This allows for us to consider the (ever-moving) contrasts between panegyric, patronage and the shady world of revolution.

Claudius became emperor after the death of Gaius (Caligula) in AD 41 and there is a surfeit of potential reasons as to why he was the eventual winner of the unseemly scramble for power. Was he a puppet of the Praetorian guard? A shadowy member of one of the conspiracies to kill the ruling *princeps*? An unlikely bulwark against a power hungry Senate that wanted a return to the *Respublica*? In "'All things to all men': Claudius and the politics of AD 41" Gibson contends that in the time following the murder of Gaius in AD 41, the stabilisation of the government and rule was brought about by the actions and planning of Claudius. The Senate wanted a restoration of the republic and the soldiers the preservation of the principate but Claudius aimed, initially at least, to be a true *primus inter pares*. He seemed to be projected forward by the army but he was wary of the Senate and treachery was never far away. The coin showing Claudius as *princeps* shaking the hand of a Praetorian PRAETOR RECEPT provides important evidence for what transpired in the political aftermath. The essay explores the iconography of this issue which demonstrates a key strategic policy and an essential component of the political manifesto issued on coins in the early years of Claudius' principate.

Seneca's *Octavia* is set in AD 62 and centres upon Nero's decision to divorce his wife Claudia Octavia, the daughter of Claudius. Seneca offers a remarkable insight into the adoption, adaptation and rejection of

multiple potential identities assumed by the classic tyrant-emperor, the disparagingly termed *Nero insitiuus* (*Oct.* 249). Emma Buckley's "*Nero insitiuus*: imperial identity and self-representation in the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia*" posits the development of Seneca's allusive model of an imperial persona and Nero's self-reflective construct of a tragic identity centred on his last words. Buckley asserts these words were ripped from Lucan's *Bellum Civile* 'to re-conceptualise Augustus' rise to power as civil war'. Nero wanted to be seen as a natural heir, a Julio-Claudian, through his continuing civil war with the citizenry and by utilizing the model of emperorship created by Augustus. Buckley asserts that in the *Octavia*, Seneca creates a Nero who pulls all the representational political and theatrical strings. The essay explicates a 'self-scripting' Nero alongside a 'retro-scripting' deviant emperor who is able to overpower 'reality' to restructure and recreate the historic and propagandist past, and even to reform the 'golden age' of Augustus in his own disfigured image. The *Octavia* presents the reader with the struggle between different textualised identities to be assumed by the emperor, and presents the scholar with a locus for investigation into the role of imperial representation in fiction and history.

"Nero Caesar and the Half-Baked Principate" puts forward the thesis that even though Nero's rule was portrayed in the sources as self-indulgent and self-obsessed, the Julio-Claudian principate remained close to its Republican roots. John Drinkwater maintains that the principate had not been constructed as an imperial monarchy and that a recurrent misrepresentation of a 'restored republic' was the root of the emperor's problems. Nero was patently unsuited to the task at hand; he was badly served by Seneca, and lacked a strong partnership with the Senate. Nevertheless, a more mature Principate was emerging. Drinkwater concludes that Nero lasted longer than he might have because the Principate had acquired functional capabilities that in good times could support the most incompetent of *principes*, and in bad would ensure the continuing integrity of the Roman Empire.

Conclusion

These essays give insight into some of the challenges that present themselves when one examines Augustus' principate, and the post-Augustan world of his familial successors. A factor that became evident across the period of this project is the concept and the reality of the Principate as an ever-changing entity that requires contextualising and re-appraisal in relation to any given period. An individual *princeps* could suffer from external

pressures, either real or imagined, and rooted in the past or the present. Not only is the contemporary political milieu significant but a *princeps*' predecessors can be constant companions and these figures require to be either embraced or kept at a distance. Even Claudius, who followed on from the 'divinely inspired' rule of Gaius, decided not to destroy completely all traces of his nephew because it would distort Claudius' legitimate rule as a successor as well as serve as a potential insult to the memory of his brother Germanicus, the heir of Augustus and Tiberius, and Gaius' father. While there have been many scholarly endeavours that have examined the main literary sources such as Suetonius, Tacitus, Dio Cassius and which describe the post-Augustus Julio-Claudian principate as part of a political and constitutional past that led directly to their present, this collection of essays adds another dimension to that work. How the sources record, assimilate and re-transmit the accounts tells us much about the reception of the Principate in the late first and early second centuries.

The Roman Revolution methodically sets out the changes that took place as Rome moved from senatorial to imperial control. Syme's title is well chosen and resonates throughout these essays because, as Osgood argues, there was no grand plan for succession, more a number of steps to make any return to civil war much less likely, and turning the clock back a far more difficult prospect. The successors of Augustus would still take steps to prevent any counter revolution to restore the Republic, and so reduce the potential for revisiting the dangers that had surfaced in the competition for prestige and power between Octavian, Pompey and Antony. Gaius took the Principate to both new heights and new depths by determinedly exploring the Hellenistic concept of absolute rule. Before this, Gaius had ensured his accession to the Principate by controlling the manner and timing of the handover of power from the deceased *princeps* to his heir. Organisation, presenting the accession as a done deal and restricting rivals from gathering support were ably demonstrated by Gaius, and later Nero in AD 54. The stand-off and subsequent political horse-trading between the Senate and Claudius after the death of Gaius in AD 41 is a case in point—nobody was ready. Apart from removing the emperor, the conspirators' planning was a failure in terms of providing a ready-made solution, and the Senate's strategy of pursuing self-interest would wither once public support demonstrably moved behind the one man who had the support of the Praetorians.

The analyses here focus on the establishment of the Augustan dynasty, what happens after the political and constitutional baton has been handed over to Tiberius and on its final demise in the hands of Nero. The literary sources try to understand the same questions we consider now. What makes

an emperor? How does one show oneself to be emperor? Does the man signify the 'office' of *princeps*? If so, how does he do that convincingly? There are times of change and times of consolidation but they are part of the same irresistible process of political development that by its nature is dynamic. No matter how much Augustus is the model helmsman to whom they aspire, or how many statues or buildings carry his name, any subsequent change of emperor pushes the first *princeps* further back into the past. The perception of the *princeps* by the people of Rome and by the Senate changed either through choice or necessity, and Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius and Nero had differing degrees of success in forging their own singular identities in the light of Augustus' meticulous construction of constitutional and dynastic machinery—an apparatus that worked for him but would not necessarily always function as smoothly for those who followed.

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SUETONIUS AND THE SUCCESSION TO AUGUSTUS

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In his biography of Augustus Suetonius offers no discussion of Augustus' plans for succession, nor in subsequent lives is 'succession' ever used as a rubric to organize material or judge emperors. The contrast with modern scholars of the Caesars is striking. Barbara Levick, for example, devotes a chapter of her study of Tiberius to the "Dynastic Catastrophe" and a chapter of her *Vespasian* to "Vespasian and His Sons."[1] More explicitly, Anthony Barrett has an early chapter in his life of Caligula on "The Struggle for the Succession" and Miriam Griffin a retrospective chapter in her life of Nero on "The Problem of the Succession."[2] Contributors to Barrett's serial *Lives of the Caesars* regularly include a section on the succession (e.g., Werner Eck on "Succession" in his chapter on Augustus, Anthony Birley on "Hadrianic Succession" in his chapter on Marcus Aurelius).[3] In my own recent study of the principate of Claudius the problem of succession is foregrounded throughout.[4] Whole articles and monographs are devoted to various aspects of the subject, and it looms large in a remarkable essay by Paul Veyne "Qu' était-ce qu' un empereur romain?".[5]

Suetonius' practice, to be sure, is followed by Fergus Millar, who (as Keith Hopkins noted in a review) never mentioned in *The Emperor and the Roman World* the problem of succession, despite its evident interest to modern historians.[6] It certainly is anachronistic, and arguably misleading, to use such phrases as "succession policy" when speaking of Roman emperors, especially early Roman emperors, and Millar's avowed goal in his study was

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1 Levick (1976) 148–179 and Levick (1999) 184–195 respectively. I take the opportunity to acknowledge here very helpful comments from Alisdair Gibson on an earlier draft of this chapter.

2 Barrett (1990) 17–41 and Griffin (1984) 189–196.

3 Eck (2008) 31–35 and Birley (2008) 182–183.

4 See especially Osgood (2011) 11, 21, 29–46, 206–224, and 268.

5 Veyne (2005) 15–78. Examples of articles and books heavily concerned with the subject are Parsi (1963), Scheid (1992), and Flaig (1992), and for further remarks on the literature see Osgood (2011) 268.

6 Hopkins (1978) 180.

to avoid the use of any "conceptions drawn from wider sociological studies."[7] Still, historians are right to debate what Augustus' own plans for a successor were, or for that matter *were not*, and in particular if he had a conception of hereditary succession—of a succession, as Ronald Syme influentially put, "in his own family and of his own blood."[8] If for no other reason, the debate matters because these plans did impinge on the legitimacy of Augustus' actual successors, especially Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, and therefore influenced decisions that they and others such as provincial governors, the Praetorians, and courtiers made (as the chapters by Gibson and Drinkwater in this volume explore).[9]

In this paper, then, I deal with two problems, the first being the traditional problem of Augustus' plans for a succession—much has been written on this, we shall see, but it is a vital issue for this volume.[10] The second, more novel, problem is how to explain Suetonius' treatment of succession. After examining what Suetonius has to say about the succession to Augustus, I then use other evidence to suggest what decisions were made regarding succession under Augustus. Some significant omissions in Suetonius' account are thus revealed, but I will conclude by suggesting that Suetonius, writing in the second century AD, does after all have a specific approach to the problem of succession, which has shaped his account of Augustus. His views are worth taking seriously because they help to suggest not only how Romans of his day thought about succession but also how Augustus' approach to succession could be reconceived to supply a continuing precedent for the developing political culture of the principate. As with other renowned historical events—the issuing of Magna Carta or the Boston Tea Party for example—the grand theme of 'The Succession to Augustus' could be reinvented by later generations to suit their own needs.

Suetonius on the Succession to Augustus

Suetonius, as noted, nowhere mentions Augustus' specific plans for how, if at all, the extraordinary power he had achieved should be directly perpetuated after his death. The closest he gets is to quote Augustus' edict of 2 BC,

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7 Millar (1977) xii.

8 Syme (1939) 341.

9 See also, for example, on Caligula, Winterling (2011) 52–89; on Claudius, Osgood (2011) 206–224; on Nero Griffin (1984) 189–196.

10 The bibliography is immense, and my citations throughout are intended as illustrative rather than exhaustive.

explaining that he had included statues of great past generals in his new forum as a model for both himself "as long as he lived and the *principes* of following generations" (*Aug.* 31.5).[11] Of Augustus' nephew Marcellus, married to his daughter Julia and claimed by Cassius Dio to have been considered a possible successor to Augustus when the latter was ill in 23 BC (53.30.1–2), Suetonius has little to say. He mentions the theater built by Augustus that bore Marcellus' name (29.4) and its dedicatory games (43.5), and he notes the marriage to Julia (63.1). The only hint of a more significant role is the mention of Agrippa's departure for Mytilene because of a suspected coolness on the part of Augustus and "a preference shown for Marcellus" (66.3).

Of Gaius and Lucius Caesar, the sons of Julia and her second husband Agrippa both of whom Augustus adopted after Lucius' birth in 17 BC, more is said but still nothing explicitly about succession. Augustus' efforts to teach them reading and swimming and to imitate his own handwriting are referred to (64.3) and his insistence that the boys prove themselves, when an audience at the theater stood up and applauded them (56.2). Their subsequent introduction to public life—the formal *deductio in forum*—is mentioned (26.2) and their initiation at a young age into administration, at which point they were sent out to the provinces as consuls elect (64.1). Little is learned of their careers after this point until their deaths, just eighteen months apart (in AD 2 and 4); "though he was happy and confident in his offspring and the training of his household, Fortune forsook Augustus," Suetonius memorably observes (65.1). Any further intentions Augustus had for the boys are never made clear, even though Suetonius had a perfect opportunity to say something when he mentions their adoption (64.1). Cassius Dio, we can note, when he mentions the adoptions, claims that both boys were appointed by Augustus "straightaway as successors to his powers (διαδόχους τῆς ἀρχῆς)" (54.18.1).

To Tiberius, who of course by any reckoning did ultimately succeed Augustus as *princeps*, there are many more references in *Divus Augustus*, including quotations of letters that Augustus wrote to Tiberius (for example about dicing [71.2–3]). We see an exchange between the two men over citizenship on behalf of a Greek client of Tiberius (40.3), we see Augustus criticizing Tiberius' style (86.2). Tiberius took over a recitation for Augustus (85.1), finished the prayer at the *lustrum* (97.1), and enjoyed a private conversation with Augustus on Augustus' deathbed (98.5). Though Tiberius gave a

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11 Translations are my own throughout.

eulogy for the dead Augustus (100.3) and was named heir in Augustus' will (101.2), there is nothing on his role as a successor. The adoption of Tiberius in AD 4 is briefly mentioned (65.1), but nothing of its significance is mentioned, nor are the powers Augustus shared with Tiberius at that time. This seems surprising, given that Suetonius' is an Augustus fixated on the future: the edict mentioning the "*principes* of following generations" has already been mentioned, and there is also Augustus' famous wish (from another edict) that after his death the "foundations of the state which I have laid will stay in their proper place" (28.2).

For any understanding of what Augustus intended, the reader of *Divus Augustus* has to turn to the next life. *Tiberius* sheds little new light on Marcellus, aside from his appearance with Tiberius at the Actian triumph (6.4). Concerning Gaius and Lucius Caesar, however, Suetonius is now more forthcoming. In coming to Tiberius' departure for Rhodes in 6 BC, the biographer writes, using a suggestive simile, "Some think that now that Augustus' sons were grown, Tiberius had of his own volition yielded his place and occupancy, as it were, of the position of being second that he had long assumed" (*Quidam existimant, adultis iam Augusti liberis, loco et quasi possessione usurpati a se diu secundi gradus sponte cessisse*, 10.1); in doing this, Suetonius continues, Tiberius was following the example of Agrippa when he left Rome for Mytilene. Then, when his tribunician power expired, Tiberius asked, since the boys were grown up "and comfortably maintaining their position of being second" (*et secundum locum facile tutantibus*), to be allowed to return. Suetonius' Tiberius, it should be noted, cannot think in terms directly of a "successor" (*successor*), and the Loeb translation of the Latin phrase here "and [they] had an undisputed claim on the succession" is misleading. Still, even by implication all Suetonius suggests is that only *after* Tiberius' withdrawal did Gaius and Lucius comfortably gain recognition as being the likely successors of Augustus.

So it was that when Tiberius did return to Rome (in AD 2), he did so "with bold and sure hope for his future" (*magna nec incerta spe futurorum*) only because of "signs and predictions from his earliest years" (14.1). These included the prediction of the astrologer Scribonius, who (when Tiberius was an infant) "gave his word that wonderful things were to come, even that one day Tiberius would rule, but without the trappings of royalty, for of course the power of the Caesars was at that point still unknown" (14.2). We see Tiberius with his astrologer Thrasyllus when the ship arrives at Rhodes with the good news that he may return (14.4) and later we are told more explicitly of Tiberius' addiction to astrology and his belief that everything was determined by fate (69).

Whatever Tiberius and his astrologer believed, the situation clarified for all after Tiberius' return; "within two years Gaius and Lucius were dead and Tiberius along with their brother Marcus Agrippa was adopted by Augustus, Tiberius having been required first to adopt Germanicus, his brother's son" (15.2). No chance was missed, Suetonius continues, to enhance Tiberius' prestige, and especially after Agrippa's removal, "it was clear that the hope of succession lay in one man alone" (*certum erat uni spem successionis incumbere*, 15.2). Here we have Suetonius' first use of the word *successio* in the *Caesars*. Not only is Tiberius thus dramatically identified as the widely recognized candidate to succeed Augustus, Suetonius also in this life now clarifies that this was Augustus' carefully considered wish. Despite a general belief that Augustus had serious doubts about Tiberius or even favored him simply so that *he* could seem better than his first successor, Suetonius writes in a rare first-person intrusion, "I, however, cannot be lead to think that so very thoughtful and foresighted a *princeps* as Augustus did anything precipitately, especially in so important a matter" (21.3).[12]

The suspicion that "Tiberius had been designated successor from necessity rather than by choice" was fueled, Suetonius subsequently notes, when the will of Augustus was read out before the Senate (23). "Since cruel Fortune has snatched from me my sons, Gaius and Lucius, let Tiberius Caesar be my heir with a two-thirds share of the estate" it began, and the phrasing, as is often pointed out, finds echo in another document released at this time, Augustus' *Res Gestae* (14.1). Why, one can fairly ask, should Augustus have started his will this way—or, for that matter, devoted a paragraph (14) of the *Res Gestae* to the honors voted for Gaius and Lucius, without magnifying Tiberius at all in that document? We turn from Suetonius now and come to our other problem, the problem of Augustus' plans for the succession.

The Succession to Augustus: Other Perspectives

In Suetonius' conception, Augustus did wish for the foundations that he had laid to be perpetuated and ultimately saw Tiberius as the right choice to succeed to his position; to Suetonius it was clear, too, that after Tiberius left Rome in 6 BC for Rhodes and Augustus' sons had come of age, Gaius and Lucius had the claim on succession. With this relatively cautious assessment

[12] Similar claims for an impure motive on Augustus' part are ascribed to the hostile crowd at his funeral by Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.10.7) and are also cited by Dio Cass. (56.45.3).

we can contrast Tacitus' brief but memorable portrait of an Augustus determined to solidify his *dominatio* already with Marcellus (*Ann.* 1.3) and, more usefully, the account of the principal ancient authority other than Suetonius for the age of Augustus, Cassius Dio. While Dio's Augustus, facing illness in 23 BC, did finally appoint no successor (διάδοχος) (53.30.1), much to the astonishment of everyone, who expected him to name Marcellus, after the birth of the grandsons Gaius and Lucius the situation had changed. When we first meet Gaius, a yearly sacrifice of an ox on his birthday was granted (54.8.5) and when he was adopted as a three-year-old, as already mentioned, he and his infant brother were immediately appointed as successors to Augustus' powers (54.18.1). After Agrippa's death in 12 BC Augustus, in need of a collaborator, "reluctantly chose Tiberius, for his grandsons at this time were still boys" (54.31.1).

Despite this effort to promote the grandsons from the start, Augustus did, according to Dio, face some disappointments. He was dismayed by excessive applause for Gaius at the theater (54.27.1) and he later felt that their lifestyle had become too luxurious, the boys themselves spoiled by the flattery heaped on them (55.9.1–2). The boys should only be promoted in accord with their merits. All the same, after Tiberius' departure to Rhodes—afraid of the two boys' anger, Tiberius had left, on the pretext of educational study—Gaius, as soon as he came of age, was brought into the Senate; appointed *princeps iuventutis*; and allowed to become *sevir equitum*, a commander of one of the equestrian squadrons (55.9.9). Lucius gained the same honors by 2 BC (55.9.10), and both were sent abroad, to be trained for rule.[13]

Dio's reconstruction need not to be taken at face value. He himself observed in regard to Tiberius' departure for Rhodes, "Every possible conjecture was entertained" (55.9.8); and he prefaced his whole account of imperial history with a warning that his account might be based on not entirely reliable sources (53.19). Indeed, modern historians have felt free to disagree with Dio. Syme's views, as put forth in *The Roman Revolution*, have already been alluded to, and do happen to be more in line with Dio's—and Tacitus'. In his (utterly speculative) reconstruction of the "crisis in party and state" of 23 BC, Syme declared that on Marcellus Augustus "set his hopes of a line of succession that should be not merely dynastic, but in his own family and of

[13] It should be noted that from 55.9.4 (6 BC) through to 55.10.2 (2 BC) Dio's text as preserved in the *Codex Marcianus* is lost and is reconstructed only partially from Byzantine epitomes and excerpts.

his own blood," and this is a thread running through the rest of the book.[14] As Gaius and Lucius grew to manhood, "the dynastic aspirations of Augustus were revealed" and "nobody could have been deceived," even though it was only after Tiberius' departure that the "rapid honours and royal inheritance that awaited the princes" were disclosed.[15] Then, with the deaths of Gaius and Lucius, "fortune … shattered Augustus' ambition of securing the succession for one of his own blood."[16] Still, in AD 4, "Augustus remained true to himself," forcing Tiberius to adopt Germancius, "who perpetuated the descent of the municipal Octavii."[17]

Erich Gruen, on the other hand, in his account of "Augustus and the Making of the Principate" seems to reach almost opposite conclusions.[18] While his Augustus wished to "assure the stability of his achievement" he was "committed to avoiding any overt signs of an institutionalized position subject to inheritance."[19] In 23 BC "Augustus designated no successor … or indeed any time thereafter."[20] It is "anachronistic" to regard the adoptions of Gaius and Lucius as part of "succession policy," and the rapid honors for them were only determined upon *after* Tiberius' departure, "lest the final threads of continuity be snapped."[21] Gaius and Lucius had to prove themselves. After their deaths, "Tiberius … alone survived as the hope for the future" and was adopted; his adoption of Germanicus and Augustus' of Agrippa Postumus at the same time served only "to reduce the likelihood of factions within the household."[22]

It may seem remarkable that two historians could take such different views—and both have their supporters, and there are other opinions still.[23] But there is a simple explanation for this debate: from start to finish, nothing about "succession" was ever made explicit by Augustus, or the Senate and People—there were no edicts, no decrees, no laws about the succession to Augustus. This is obviously a cornerstone of Gruen's position, but it is acknowledged by Syme too; as he writes towards the end of *Roman*

14 Syme (1939) 341. Syme's views are reiterated at Syme (1986) 82–85 and 93–94.
15 Syme (1939) 416 and 417.
16 Syme (1939) 430.
17 Syme (1939) 431.
18 Gruen (2005).
19 Gruen (2005) 38.
20 Gruen (2005) 42.
21 Gruen (2005) 46.
22 Gruen (2005) 48.
23 E.g., Corbett (1974), Levick (1976) 31–67, Judge (1977), Bowersock (1984), Hurlet (1997) esp. 365–538, Severy (2003) 158–212, Wiseman (2004) 227–277, Levick (2010) 180–189.

Revolution, "even though hereditary succession was sternly banished from the theory of the Principate, every effort was made to apply it in practice."[24]

Any treatment of "Augustus and the Succession" needs, therefore, to keep constantly in mind this lack of explicitness throughout Augustus' lifetime. The question remains, though: was Augustus *implicitly* trying to promote the idea of a direct successor of an "institutionalized position", and, as Syme argued, a hereditary successor in particular? I cannot treat here all of the relevant evidence from (say) 27 BC onwards, but will make a few remarks focusing especially on the key decade of 6 BC–AD 4—where evidence beyond Suetonius and Cassius Dio is available.[25] I shall first briefly reconstruct, as best we can, what did happen, publicly, and then offer some interpretation, before I return to Suetonius.

A new Vipsanius Agrippa was born in 20 BC, and a younger brother to him three years later, and in 17 BC both were adopted, becoming Iulii Caesares, Gaius and Lucius.[26] At the dedicatory games for the Theater of Marcellus held in 13 BC, Gaius along with other patrician boys performed the *lusus Troiae*, the grand equestrian display that was believed to have come to Rome from Troy, was celebrated by Julius Caesar, was made a regular institution under Augustus, and was colorfully described in the funeral games for Anchises in book 5 of Vergil's *Aeneid* (5.545–603), with Aeneas' son Iulus taking a starring role.[27] That same year, Gaius was met with applause and acclamations in the theater.[28] In 9 BC, when the Ara Pacis was revealed, Gaius and Lucius, it seems clear, could be seen on the (now fragmentary) north frieze.[29] Though they were separated from Augustus on the south frieze, Rose has argued that Gaius and Augustus evoked, through costume, pose and gesture, the figures of the father and son shown in the Aeneas relief

[24] Syme (1939) 513.

[25] The chapter of Seager in this volume explores evidence from the period of AD 4 onwards, a crucial feature of which is the emergence of the concept of the *Domus Augusta*. Rowe (2002), a brilliant study of the political culture of the late Augustan and Tiberian periods, also emphasizes the emergence of the "dynastic" house but it should be noted relies on little evidence from prior to 6 BC and mostly on evidence from after AD 4.

[26] Dio Cass. 54.8.5, 18.1; Vell. Pat. 2.96.1; Suet. *Aug.* 64.1. In the resumé that follows I cite mainly the direct evidence only (always Dio first, as his account provides the whole skeleton onto which all the other evidence can be fit), so as to focus attention on what is actually known with more or less certainty, rather than what is supposed.

[27] Games, dated to 13 BC: Dio Cass. 54.26.1 (cf. Plin. *NH* 8.65, and see Suet. *Aug.* 43.5).

[28] Dio Cass. 54.27.1 (and cf. Suet. *Aug.* 56.2). It is likely that in 12 BC Augustus gave gladiatorial names in the name of his sons: see Dio Cass. 54.28.3 and *RG* 22.1 with Cooley (2009) ad loc.

[29] On this and what follows I am—despite much controversy—persuaded by the discussion of Rose (1997) 15–17, which offers careful iconographical arguments. For one different view see now Kleiner and Buxton (2008) 72–76.

at the western entrance of the monument; Gaius and Augustus, in other words, were assimilated, albeit subtly, to the "Trojan founders of the Julian dynasty."[30]

The year 9 BC was notable too for the death of Tiberius' often overlooked younger brother Drusus, while campaigning in Germany. The two brothers had campaigned together successfully in the Alps in 15 BC—an event that appears to have been celebrated on contemporary coinage, though neither brother is identified by a legend.[31] Tiberius then commanded in Illyricum, Drusus in Germany, each winning triumphal honors and a grant of *imperium*; Tiberius also held his first consulship in 13 BC.[32] Spending time with Augustus in Gaul in 11 BC and then campaigning again in Illyricum in 10 BC, he returned, along with Drusus and Augustus, to Rome at the end of that year, for Drusus' first tenure of the consulship (9 BC).[33] Tiberius left once more for Illyricum, and Drusus for Germany, with Drusus never to return.[34] His funeral was particularly elaborate, with eulogies from both Tiberius and Augustus; the latter included in his a prayer that his Caesars would be like Drusus.[35]

The following year, 8 BC, Gaius Caesar left Rome with Augustus to participate in a training exercise with the Rhine legions—while Tiberius, meanwhile, actually commanded across the Rhine—and Augustus used the occasion of Gaius' exercise, at least in part, as an opportunity for a donative to the troops, "the only donative the legionaries are known to have received between 29 BC and AD 14."[36] Coins issued by the Lyons mint, which depict Gaius on horseback before legionary standards, wearing a *bulla*, and identify him as "the son of Augustus," were issued at this time (certainly before 5 BC) and likely used to pay the donative.[37] Tiberius, meanwhile, was voted

30 Rose (1997) 16.

31 Campaigns: see esp. Dio Cass. 54.22; Suet. *Aug*. 21.1, *Tib*. 9.2, *Claud*. 1.2; Hor. *Carm*. 4.4, 14; Vell. Pat. 2.95.1–2. Coinage: *RIC* I (second ed.) Augustus nos. 164–165.

32 Tiberius in Illyricum and his honors: see esp. Dio Cass. 54.31.2–3, 54.34.3–4; Suet. *Tib*. 9.2; Vell. Pat. 2.96.2–3. Drusus in Germany and his honors: see esp. Dio Cass. 54.32–33; Suet. *Claud*. 1.2; Vell. Pat. 2.97. Consulship of Tiberius: Dio Cass. 54.25.1; Suet. *Tib*. 9.3 etc.

33 Tiberius' career 11–10 BC: see esp. Dio Cass. 54.35.4, 54.36.3–4. Drusus' career 11–9 BC: see esp. Dio Cass. 54.35.5, 54.36.3–4, 55.1.1–2.1.

34 Last days of Drusus: in addition to the principal account, Dio Cass. 55.1.1–2.1, see esp. Suet. *Claud*. 1.3; Vell. Pat. 2.97.3; Val. Max. 5.5.3; *Cons. Liv*.

35 Funeral of Drusus and associated honors: see esp. Dio Cass. 55.2.1–3; Suet. *Claud*. 1.3, 5; Tac. *Ann*. 3.5.2; *Cons. Liv*; Sen. *Marc*. 3. Augustus' prayer: Suet. *Claud*. 1.3, 5.

36 Gaius and the Rhine legions: Dio Cass. 55.6.1–4; on the donative I quote Rich (1990) 224. Tiberius: Dio Cass. 55.6.1–5; Suet. *Aug*. 21.1, *Tib*. 9.2; Vell. Pat. 2.97.4.

37 *RIC* I (second ed.) Augustus 198–199.

a triumph, which he celebrated in Rome in 7 BC, the year of his second consulship.[38] By the time of Augustus' reentry into Rome later that year, Tiberius had already left for Germany again, and games in honor of the imperial *adventus* were held by Gaius.[39] Also this year lavish gladiatorial games featuring one-on-one and team combat were held to commemorate the five-year anniversary of Agrippa's death; they were held in the Saepta Agrippa had built, "with everyone except Augustus wearing dark clothing, even Agrippa's sons", in whose name the games were probably held.[40]

What happened next is principally known from the partially mutilated account of Cassius Dio (55.9.1–8) mentioned above. Evidently there was in 6 BC further popular support shown to Gaius and Lucius, votes were cast for Gaius at the consular election—at which Augustus himself was standing—and a public discussion of honors for Gaius had to be held. Augustus expressed disproval of what had transpired and "prayed that no compelling circumstances should arise to require anyone younger than the age of twenty to become consul, as had occurred for him" but when pressed further, he gave an ambiguous response. Gaius was perhaps made *pontifex* now.[41] Tiberius, meanwhile, granted for the first time tribunician power, with his *imperium* perhaps adjusted too, shortly afterwards elected to leave Rome, ultimately to arrive in Rhodes.[42]

Then followed Gaius Caesar's official entry into public life—he would have donned, as was customary, the toga of manhood and entered the Forum, accompanied by his father, who was holding the consulship that year (5 BC), the first time in almost two decades.[43] In this year, too, a cash donation was extended to the people of Rome—perhaps in conjunction with this event. Now, or perhaps slightly before (even still in 6 BC), Gaius was appointed as consul, to enter the magistracy five years later, in AD 1, at the start of which year he would be in the twentieth year of his life.[44] The Senate further decreed that from the time of his entry into public life Gaius should take part in their deliberations.[45] And the equestrian order presented

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38 Dio Cass. 55.6.5, 55.8.2; Suet. *Tib*. 9.2; Vell. 2.97.4.

39 Tiberius' departure: Dio Cass. 55.8.3. Games: Dio Cass. 55.8.3.

40 Dio Cass. 55.8.5; *RG* 22.1.

41 Dio Cass. 55.9.4; *ILS* 131 etc.

42 Tribunician power for Tiberius: Dio Cass. 55.9.4 (with Rich [1990] and Swan [2004] ad loc. for *imperium*); *RG* 6.2; Vell. Pat. 2.99.1; Suet. *Tib*. 9.3.

43 *Deductio*: Dio Cass. 55.9.8; *RG* 14.1; Suet. *Aug*. 26.2. Donative (240 sesterces): *RG* 15.2.

44 *RG* 14.1; *CIL* 6.36893; *ILS* 131 etc.; cf. Dio Cass. 55.9.1–2 with Rich (1990) and Swan (2004) ad loc.

45 *RG* 14.1; cf. Dio Cass. 55.9.4, 9.

Gaius with silver shields and spears and hailed him as *princeps iuventutis*; Gaius was also made *sevir equitum*.[46] An honorific inscription in the Roman Forum proclaimed Gaius to be the first Roman appointed to the consulship when he was fourteen.[47]

His introduction into public life also attracted attention overseas. An oath of loyalty, a bronze tablet from Spain has now revealed, was sworn at this time by the magistrates, senate, and people of Conobaria in Baetica to Augustus, "the son of the Divine Julius" along with Gaius Caesar "son of Augustus, *princeps iuventutis*, consul designate, pontiff" as well as Lucius and Agrippa Postumus, on behalf of their "safety, honor, and victory."[48] Also around this time an oath was sworn for Augustus and his sons in Samos, and a delegation came from Samos to Rome led by the priest of the cult of Augustus, Gaius, and Agrippa.[49] Samos' neighbor Sardis, it is also known through epigraphy, staged elaborate celebrations in honor of Gaius' coming of age; and Sardis too sent an embassy to Rome to celebrate with Augustus and Gaius.[50]

A year later the same set of honors was voted to Lucius, Lucius was made augur around this time, Augustus held a second consulship in 2 BC—when Lucius did assume the honors—and there was another distribution of money in Rome.[51] In 2 BC or later an honorific inscription went up for Lucius in the Forum; an oath of loyalty to Augustus, his children, and his descendants, is on record for Gangra, in Paphlagonia, sworn by provincials and Romans alike, at temples and altars of Augustus.[52] And also around this time began a coin issue with Gaius and Lucius ("THE SONS OF AUGUSTUS"), togate and veiled, holding spears and shields and shown with symbols of their priesthoods.[53]

The year 2 BC saw the dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor and the staging of elaborate games, including mock battles (one involved crocodiles in the Circus Flaminius, another a reenactment of Salamis), gladiatorial

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46 Dio Cass. 55.9.9; *RG* 14.14.2; *CIL* 6.40326 (apparently alluding to the equestrian acclamation of Gaius or Lucius, from the Theater of Marcellus); Rowe (2002) 77–81 places the acclamation in the theater, where the equestrians had specially reserved seating, the so-called 'XIV rows.'

47 *CIL* 6.36893; cf. *EJ* 63a.

48 González (1988), whence *AE* 1988.723. In addition to the discussion of González see Rowe (2002) 135–139, Osgood (2006) 357–364, and Levick (2010) 183–184.

49 See Herrmann (1968) no. 6.

50 *EJ* 99.

51 Dio Cass. 55.9.10; *RG* 14.2, 15.4; *ILS* 132 etc.

52 Inscription: *EJ* 65. Oath of Gangra: *EJ* 315 = Herrmann (1968) no. 4.

53 *RIC* I Augustus nos. 205–212.

matches in the Saepta, and a new *ludi Martiales* with horse races.[54] Dio's account is difficult to interpret, but it seems that the young men had involvement not only in the games but also in the dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor, the centerpiece of Augustus' great new forum, which prominently showcased the *gens Iulia*, including the Divine Julius, as well as the generals the "*principes* of future generations" were to emulate. It must have been around now that statues went up for Gaius and Lucius in front of the Ionic temple of Portunus in the Forum Boarium.[55] Identifiable statues of the young men depict them with almost identical physiognomies—based closely on that of Augustus in his portraits—"distinguishable from each other only by decoding the arrangement of locks in their hairstyle."[56]

Gaius departed for the east on a Parthian campaign—perhaps as early as May of 2 BC, to coincide with the dedication of Mars Ultor and the games—was greeted enthusiastically in the Greek world, and in AD 1 entered on his consulship in Syria.[57] This or the following year he met with the Parthian King on the Euphrates—in peace, however, probably thanks to negotiations conducted beforehand by Augustus.[58] It was only from complications of a wound he sustained in his effort to reinstall the Roman nominee to the throne of Armenia that he died on 21 February AD 4 in Lycia, on his way back to Rome.[59] Lucius had already died on 20 August AD 2, aged 18, at Massilia. He had been in Rome, reading dispatches of Gaius to the Senate, but was dispatched to the west for military service.[60]

Two decrees from the military colony of Pisa record an overwhelming response to the deaths of both young men, especially Gaius.[61] After Lucius' death, the town council planned construction of an altar at which yearly

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54 Dio Cass. 55.10.1ª–8 with Swan (2004) ad loc. giving all of the other evidence, too abundant to cite here.

55 *ILS* 131–132.

56 Cooley (2009) 162. See, e.g., Pollini (1987), Zanker (1988) 219–221 Boschung (1993) 52–54, and Rose (1997) 62.

57 See esp. Dio Cass. 55.10.18–21, 10ª.4 with Swan (2004) ad loc. for the other evidence and full discussion of the problems. The date of Gaius' departure is contested, with some favoring 1 BC; the scenario of a departure in 2 BC, supported by the important discussion of Bowersock (1984), is further developed by Rose (2005) 45–50, using iconographical analysis of the altar from the Vicus Sandaliarius. Bowersock (1984) presents the evidence for Gaius' welcome in the Greek world, though some aspects of his interpretation have been questioned; see, conveniently, Schmalz (2009) 100–101.

58 For these negotiations see especially Syme (1978) 11.

59 See esp. Dio Cass. 55.10ª.8–9.

60 See esp. Dio Cass. 55.10ª.9.

61 *ILS* 139–140 = *EJ* 68–69; these decrees are especially well-discussed by Rowe (2002) 102–123.

offerings would be made to his spirit; an embassy was authorized to go to Rome to seek permission from Augustus. Two years later, the Pisans voted a lengthy period of mourning, yearly sacrifices, and construction of an elaborate arch on the attic of which would stand a statue of Gaius in triumphal dress and two gilded equestrian statues of Gaius and Lucius. This arch, it has been convincingly argued, was modeled on an arch decreed by the Senate in Rome, to stand in the Roman Forum itself.[62] Other honors voted in Rome at this time are recorded: the spears and shields voted to Gaius and Lucius by the equestrian order were set up in the Senate house, ten centuries involved in the election of the top magistracies were named after them, and their names were added to the Hymn of the Salii.[63] The Porticus of Gaius and Lucius was perhaps completed now in conjunction with the arch in the Forum, and commemorative monuments are known from across the empire, beyond those in Pisa.[64] Very soon after Gaius' death followed Tiberius' adoption of Germanicus, and then on 26 June AD 4 Augustus' adoption of Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus.[65] Augustus announced publicly that the adoption of Tiberius was *rei publica causa*, "for the good of the commonwealth."[66] Tiberius regained tribunician power and *imperium* too, and explained that he had left Rome in 6 BC so as not to stand in the way of Gaius and Lucius.[67]

How is one to interpret this narrative? In a certain sense, it should be recognized, contemporaries were in no better a position to do so than we are, since, as stated above, Augustus chose not to make any explicit pronouncements about a successor, much less promulgate a "succession policy." This has two consequences. The first is that, in the absence of any policy, the hopes for the future that contemporaries *themselves* gave expression to, in response to what Augustus did (or did not) do, mattered a great deal, and themselves could shape the climate of opinion.[68] The second is that to reconstruct this climate we need to consider the whole range of evidence described above, textual and visual—poetry, statues, coins,

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62 Rose (2005) 58–64 gives a full discussion.

63 Dio Cass. 55.12.1; *EJ* 94a lines 4–12.

64 See especially Rose (1997) 18–20 and (2005) 58–64.

65 Dio Cass. 55.13.1[a]–2; Suet. *Aug*. 65.1, *Tib*. 15.2, 21.2–3; Tac. *Ann*. 1.3.3–5; Vell. Pat. 2.103.1–104.2, 112.7; *EJ* p. 49.

66 Vell. Pat. 2.104.1; Suet. *Tib*. 21.3.

67 Tribunician power and command: Dio Cass. 55.13.2; Suet. *Tib*. 16.1; Vell. Pat. 2.103.3, 104.2. Tiberius' explanation: Vell. Pat. 2.99.2; Suet. *Tib*. 10.2.

68 Cf. the discussion of Hurlet (1997) 446–484 and also for the more general point the brilliant essay of Millar (1984).

games, ceremonies, theatrical acclamations, honorific inscriptions, and the like. Some of this was on the initiative of Augustus, but oaths of loyalty or cheers in the theater (for example) may not have been.

What emerges as most remarkable is the thorough manner in which Gaius and Lucius were promoted from 6 BC onwards. By publicly consenting to the extraordinary honors for his teenage sons, by holding the consulship, and by distributing largesse to the people, Augustus was clearly indicating that a blood relationship to him carried special value. (Contemporaries might have recalled, too, that in 24 BC Augustus' nephew Marcellus, though an exact coeval of Tiberius, was granted the right to stand for the consulship ten years early, Tiberius only five, and it was Marcellus who was married to Julia.[69]) Furthermore, the new title that each of the boys received, *princeps iuventutis*, "leader of the younger generation," was especially suggestive. Constituencies from the people of Rome, to the towns of Italy, to provincial communities, immediately took note of the official measures, promoted the boys themselves, and clearly came increasingly to see Gaius and Lucius as the intended direct successors to Augustus and the position he had achieved.[70] Ovid's neat formulation in the *Ars Amatoria* is well-known: he addresses Gaius as "leader now of the young men, next to be leader of the old" (*nunc iuvenum princeps, deinde future senum, AA* 1.194); and not dissimilarly the Pisans described Gaius as "already designated *princeps*, most just and most like his father in his virtues" (*iam designatum iustissumum ac simillumum parentis sui virtutibus principem*, *EJ* 140, lines 12–13). Of course, how, or even whether, the two boys were to divide the formal powers of Augustus, as well as his vast informal authority, was an open question; time—all, to some degree, must have hoped—would tell. (The tradeoff was that a pair of would-be successors followed the Republican principle of collegiality.)

Before 6 BC, it must be said, it is harder to be sure of Augustus' intentions, or how they were perceived. Given the extreme young age of the boys, it was clear that they could not succeed to Augustus immediately, and after Agrippa's death in 12 BC Tiberius and Drusus must have seemed the most plausible candidates for direct succession.[71] But did Augustus—and

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69 On the differential treatment of Marcellus and Tiberius in 24 BC see especially the precise account of Dio Cass. 53.28.3–4. I think it is not quite correct to argue, as Severy (2003) 161 does, that prior to 6 BC "all the young men of the household enjoyed an equal status with each other."

70 See, however, Bowersock (1984) for some signs of support for Tiberius, as opposed to Gaius, in the Greek East.

71 Note especially the discussion of Kuttner (1995) 172–186, part of her book-length study arguing that the narrative reliefs of two silver cups from Boscoreale closely reproduce a major

others—harbor different hopes for the long run? It seems likely that Augustus, who clearly wished all of his family, including his stepsons, to provide visible role models for Rome as it enjoyed its *novum saeculum*, also did have some hope for a direct successor, and a hereditary successor in particular, as Syme believed, given the emphasis that he, and also the poets and artists close to him in Rome, placed on the Julian family, the *gens Iulia*. Fortune did not cooperate in giving Augustus a son, and so he did the next best thing and adopted his grandsons—in whose veins, after all, his blood flowed—and thus gave them each the key name of Julius Caesar. Just as Aeneas' son Iulus links gods and heroes to the future leaders of Rome, so the young Iulii Caesares would bind Divine Julius and Imperator Caesar Augustus to the *principes* of subsequent years.[72] Hereditary succession did have benefits, if the Augustan practice of government by a single man with *auctoritas* rather than a fiercely competitive Senatorial class was to continue. For one thing, hereditary succession powerfully suggested continuity itself, because successors to a dying *princeps* would not only bear the same names but also might bear a physical resemblance (something the artists, as we saw, played up).[73] Hereditary succession was also, seemingly anyway, predictable. As Griffin points out, "selection based on ties of blood ... had the advantage of stifling ambition and softening envy."[74]

Not to be underestimated, however, is the possibility that the benefits of some kind of hereditary succession were urged on Augustus by various groups across the empire, including the people of Rome, provincial communities, and the armies. Recollecting on nearly twenty years of devastating civil war, and dependent—at least in some instances—on the *princeps* for their grain and games, or benefits, or salaries, they were eager for the stability that monarchy seemed to offer. Emotional factors must also be given their due. As Peter Wiseman has suggested, the people in the city of Rome itself had a fondness for Agrippa, for Julia "the glamorous princess," and for Julia's "growing boys."[75] The *plebs*, it is recorded, protested Julia's treatment after her banishment in 2 BC and protested, too, Augustus' adoption of Tiberius in AD 4; Augustus had to provide assurances to them then, and

monument celebrating Tiberius and Drusus put up in Rome around 8 BC. Suet. *Claud.* 1.5 might imply that Augustus publicly announced that in his will Drusus (and Tiberius) were not favored over Gaius and Lucius; perhaps this was between 12 and 9 BC.

72 On Iulus' role in the *Aeneid* and the relevance of the traditional theme of epic succession in Augustan Rome see Hardie (1993) 91–94.

73 For this idea, in relation to portraits of Tiberius and Augustus, see Vout in this volume.

74 Griffin (1984) 190.

75 Wiseman (2004) 235.

would do so again in his will.[76] There were the earlier demonstrations of support for the boys in the theater. The loss of Drusus, too, might have worked to diminish Tiberius' popularity, by focusing the spotlight on the aloofness that Tiberius was to grow notorious for. The larger point is that plans for the succession were, like so much else of the ideology of the emerging principate, developed in dialogue. It was not Augustus' choice alone.

The end result was that by the death of Gaius Caesar in AD 4, whatever Augustus' thoughts, his blood had acquired a particular potency, ideologically, and this was confirmed by Tiberius' adoption of Augustus' grandnephew Germanicus in AD 4, and Germanicus' marriage around this time to Julia Agrippina.[77] Tiberius had to adopt Germanicus first, because after entering the *potestas* of Augustus he could not himself adopt, but by the same token after his adoption by Augustus and the corresponding loss of his own *potestas*, Tiberius' hands were tied.[78] As Seager shows in this volume, the adoptions were immediately interpreted to convey a sequence of succession, with Germanicus next in line after Tiberius, ahead of Tiberius' son Drusus; and there was concomitantly a new emphasis on a multigenerational, but harmonious, *domus Augusta*. One may add that Augustus' assurance that the adoption of Tiberius was "for the good of the commonwealth," was an admission—albeit a tacit one—that the issue was "political rather than financial succession."[79] The consequences, across the next seventy years or so were to be manifold—ranging from the murder of Agrippa Postumus in AD 14, the advent of the false Postumus, and the support of the *plebs* for Agrippina on her return to Rome in AD 20, onto Claudius' decision to adopt Nero, in whose veins Augustus' blood flowed, Nero's nomination as *princeps iuventutis*, his accession at the age of sixteen, his persecution of the remaining biological successors of Augustus, and the chaos that ensued after the line of the Caesars was extinct.

Yet despite the power that the "blood of Augustus" had come to be associated with, Augustus himself, as Gruen rightly insists, doggedly avoided any overt references to hereditary monarchy—indeed, to monarchy at all—to the day he died. Writing to Gaius Caesar himself, he speaks of Gaius and Lucius "taking over my post" (διαδεχομένων *stationem meam*), using a mil-

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76 Protest over Julia: Dio Cass. 55.13.1; Suet. *Aug*. 65.3; Tac. *Ann*. 1.53.1. Protest over Tiberius and Augustus' reassurance: Vell. Pat. 2.104.1; Suet. *Tib*. 21.3, 68.3; Tac. *Ann*. 1.10.7.

77 On the "blood of Augustus"—a phrase used by Tacitus (*Augusti sanguis, Ann.* 3.4.2, cf. 4.52.2)—Wiseman (2004) 227–277 gives a powerful account.

78 Thanks to Alisdair Gibson for help in formulating this point. On the legal issues see, e.g., Lindsay (2009) 197–200.

79 Lindsay (2009) 199.

itary metaphor that may well have been employed by the Senate when it discussed Tiberius' succession in AD 14 (cf. Vell. Pat. 2.124.4).[80] And the military metaphor was not an empty one. While Augustus could support the spate of public honors for the boys, he was insistent that they would have to acquire *auctoritas* too, which he maintained was the basis of his own position (*RG* 34.3). They could only do that through military service; Augustus felt compelled to risk Gaius and Lucius, at least to some degree, and he paid a terrible price for it, as did Gaius. Gaius, arguably, was the first casualty of the *implicit* principles of succession that were emerging.

In his testament for posterity, the *Res Gestae*, Augustus (as already noted) mentions at length the honors Gaius and Lucius received (14). Those could be a precedent of value for the future, but to state more explicitly that the boys were favored as (hereditary) successors would be too monarchical, too un-Roman. Furthermore, as Augustus himself so painfully knew, hereditary succession was hardly a foolproof way to transmit his own power or anyone else's. Indeed, as Vergil already hinted with his poignant account of Marcellus' death in *Aeneid* 6, it was all too fragile. Hence Augustus' solitary reference to *Fortuna* (aside from the more benevolent Fortuna Redux) in the *Res Gestae*: "My sons, whom fortune snatched away from me when young men …" (14.1). The *Res Gestae* dangles a hint of how hereditary succession could work, but it also underscores the pitfalls.

Spes successionis*: The Suetonian Perspective*

To summarize thus far: while Augustus never announced any policy of succession, he and the Roman world with him thought about the matter, and from 6 BC many came to see Gaius and Lucius as his possible successors, the "blood of Augustus" thus took on a special significance, and a tacit principle that Augustus would be succeeded, ideally by a hereditary successor, took hold. Suetonius, despite knowing the *Res Gestae* and having other good sources available, omits entirely in *Divine Augustus* the remarkable way in which his subject promoted Gaius and Lucius and the consequences of that; *Tiberius* does little to rectify the omission. Cassius Dio, while one may query his interpretation of the adoptions of Gaius and Lucius and also the situation in 23 BC, does better—perhaps inspired in part by the emphasis placed on hereditary succession in the late Antonine and Severan dynasties—and

80 The quotation is from Gell. *NA* 15.7.3. On the latter point see now Matthews (2010) 70–71.

modern historians, of course, have gone further, using the evidence mentioned above. Suetonius' lack of interest in Gaius and Lucius surely in part is to be explained by his priorities as a biographer. They largely get written out of Suetonius' story, because he is dealing with the lives of Augustus and then Tiberius.

But Suetonius, I shall suggest in conclusion, had a distinctive approach to the subject of succession, which modern historians seeking to reconstruct ancient mentalities should not ignore. For Suetonius, imperial power has a surprising transmission, one that often does not go according to plan and defies contemporary expectations. Throughout his *Caesars* he shows a relish for the low ebbs in the careers of those who do ultimately gain the principate.[81] *Tiberius*, for example, elaborates on that man's departure from Rome in 6 BC at the height of his success; once on Rhodes, "he began living like a regular citizen" (11.1) and in due course "he lived not only in private but even in danger and fear" (12.1). The early chapters of *Claudius* (2–9) parade that future emperor's unfitness for any kind of public life at all, his withdrawal, and the danger he faced under Caligula. Galba, out of favor under Nero, was "in retirement" (*in secessu, Galb.* 8.1), and Vespasian too (*in otio secessuque, Vesp.* 4.2): fearful of Agrippina and then Nero, he latterly lived in a small town off the beaten track, lying low, and was only selected for command in the Jewish war because of his unthreatening name. And who can forget his disgrace under Caligula? Not Suetonius (*Vesp.* 5.3), nor does he hide Titus' squalid birth (*Tit.* 1) or Domitian's difficult youth (*Dom.* 1.1).

Suetonius emphasizes the Caesars' interactions with their predecessors, as a further way to highlight the mysteries of imperial destiny. The reader reads verbatim Augustus' grave doubts about his successor Claudius (*Claud.* 4). Augustus is seen pinching the cheek of Galba and saying, "You, too, child, will have a bite of my power" (*Galb.* 4.1). Tiberius' predictions concerning Caligula are quoted (*Gai.* 11).

A corollary is that in the *Caesars* imperial power is often something that one hopes for. We already saw Tiberius' hopes increased by signs and portents from his birth onwards (*Tib.* 14.1). Caligula, after Sejanus came under suspicion, was gradually led "to hope for the succession" (*ad spem successionis, Gai.* 12.2); Galba in 68 AD acted because of "hope" encouraged by various signs (*Galb.* 9.2); Otho conceived "a hope for imperial power" (*spes imperii*) through encouragement from the astrologer Seleucus (*Oth.* 4.1); Vespasian too had long had a hope of *spes imperii*, which was stoked in

81 Cf. Louis (2010) 38–39.

AD 68 (*Vesp*. 5.1). It is not surprising that so many of these references cluster around the year of the four emperors;[82] once secure in power, Vespasian, after all, would openly declare to the Senate that either his sons would succeed him or nobody would (*Vesp*. 25).

Still it remains clear that for Suetonius imperial rule is predestined.[83] One just has to read the signs for it correctly, which (as he tells it) sometimes happened, sometimes did not. The astrologer Thrasyllus knew what Tiberius would succeed when all others had given up hope, and he got it right about Caligula too (*Tib*. 14.4, *Gai*. 19.3). A physiognomist also got it right about young Titus (*Tit*. 2). More foresighted still were those who saw the mud thrown on Vespasian's cloak by Caligula as a positive sign for the young aedile's future (*Vesp*. 5.3). But the Jews certainly got it wrong when they thought the leaders from Judea would be themselves, with tragic consequences for them (*Vesp*. 4.5). More humorous is the laughter of Vespasian's grandmother at the announcement that her grandson would be a Caesar (*Vesp*. 5.2). When even a bad emperor such as Nero himself misreads the signs, there is a hint of tragedy, especially in Nero's incorrect interpretation of the oracle of Apollo (*Ner*. 40.3). Everyone was caught off guard by Claudius' accession—for which there was only one portent, an eagle that lit upon his shoulder when he entered the Forum with the *fasces* for the first time (7); but for other emperors, especially those of the year of the four emperors, there were signs a plenty, both fresh ones and others conveniently recalled (e.g., *Galb*. 4.1–3, 8.2, 9.2, 18; *Vesp*. 5).

For Suetonius, more than anything else itself knowledge of imperial destiny is the key to power. The lives of the Caesars are full of astrologers, Thrasyllus and Seleucus, Nero's Balbillus (*Ner*. 36.1) and Domitian's Ascletarion (*Dom*. 15.3), the nameless astrologers of *Nero* 40.2. There is the physiognomist of *Tit*. 2, brought in by the freedman Narcissus to examine Britannicus; and in more than one life horoscopes are taken at birth (e.g., *Aug*. 94.5, 12; *Ner*. 6.1, *Vit*. 3.2; *Vesp*. 25). Emperors tried to control knowledge of the future, by suppressing astrologers (*Vit*. 14.4), for example, or professed to control it, as Nero did when he claimed he was in possession of a statuette that foretold the future (*Ner*. 56) or Domitian tried to disprove Ascletarion (*Dom* 15.3).[84] The Caesars are seen acting on the basis of predictions given to

82 Nor during Tiberius' period of eclipse; cf. the interesting discussion of Bowersock (1984) 180–182 of a contemporary epigram of Apollonides (*AP* 9.287) on the portent of an eagle taking up residence at Tiberius' house on Rhodes.

83 See especially Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 192–193, a brilliant discussion.

84 On the larger theme of emperors' relationship with prophecy Potter (1994) is an excel-

them: Caligula built his bridge across Baiae because of a pronouncement of Thrasyllus (*Gai.* 19.3), Nero planned murders in response to Balbillus' interpretation of a comet (*Ner.* 36.1), and Vitellius murdered his own mother after a woman of the Chatti claimed that his rule would be secure if he survived his parent (*Vit.* 14.5). She was clearly unreliable.

After the accession of unexpected candidates such as Claudius or Domitian, after the accession of the teen-aged Nero, above all after the fall of two dynasties and the adoptions of Trajan and Hadrian, imperial succession must have looked different to Suetonius and his contemporaries than it did to the Roman world in AD 14. Fundamentally, for Suetonius, it was *not* a matter of any one emperor's wishes or of "imperial policy" nor was it a matter for the Senate (as it might have been, in part, for Dio), but was rather in the stars.[85] In the long run, then, Augustus' plans for the succession, as Suetonius saw it, beyond the adoption of his actual successor Tiberius, proved ultimately inconsequential. What did count was the way Augustus' hopes were dashed: "Though he was happy and confident in his offspring and the training of his household, Fortune forsook Augustus … within the span of eighteen months, he lost Gaius and Lucius both" (*Aug.* 65.1).

If the plans Augustus and the rest of the Roman world made for Gaius and Lucius were a model that was to be emulated, at the same time their unexpected deaths proved a useful memory too for later emperors, and for those trying to make sense of later emperors and imperial rule. Augustus' lack of an explicit policy of succession led to problems for particular emperors, and arguably for the whole Roman world in AD 68. But it did also give the principate some flexibility. Later generations could assure themselves that the founder Augustus did seek to establish a line of direct successors—even if he never expressed this thought, even if he did not harbor it in the 20s BC, or at all. Ideally the successors would be of his blood, but as Suetonius knew all too well they did not have to be.

lent study, and especially useful for contextualizing Suetonius' own views. See also Cramer (1954) and MacMullen (1966) 128–162. On imperial power and knowledge more generally (including physiognomy) see Barton (1994).

85 Potter (1994) 161–162 discusses Hadrian's deployment of signs in AD 117 in relationship to Trajan's failure to name a successor at least until his death bed. See also Wallace-Hadrill (1983) 191–197, treating prognostication as a "characteristic feature of imperial society" (195). I hope to have suggested here that it is especially relevant to a monarchy that would not call itself that and was marked by notable dynastic discontinuity.

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE *DOMUS AUGUSTA*, AD 4–24*

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Introduction: The Rehabilitation of Tiberius

In 4 Augustus' dynastic plans lay in ruins. The recalcitrance of Tiberius and the deaths of Lucius and Gaius had left him with neither an immediate successor of his own blood nor a reliable deputy to act as guardian until such a successor was old enough to rule. With characteristic decision Augustus acted to remedy these deficiencies. The only possible immediate successor was Tiberius (Tac.*Ann*.1.3.3; Vell.2.103.2). Tiberius was therefore adopted, his tribunician power renewed.[1] The eventual blood successor would now be one of the sons of Germanicus and Agrippina. Accordingly, before his own adoption, Tiberius was compelled to adopt Germanicus.[2] At the same time Augustus sowed the seeds of dissension by adopting Agrippa Postumus (Vell.2.104.1; Suet.*Tib*.15.2).[3]

The position of Postumus was not the only possible source of problems for the new dispensation. Augustus had allegedly thought long and hard about bypassing Tiberius and making Germanicus his direct successor (Tac.*Ann*.4.57.3; Suet.*Cal*.4). If either Tiberius or Germanicus believed this,

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* I am grateful to Tony Birley, Bruce Gibson, Fergus Millar and Jeff Tatum for advice and assistance and to all who took part in discussion at the conference for their comments. All dates are AD unless otherwise specified. All translations are my own. It is perhaps necessary to explain briefly why the reader will find no treatment of the Grand Camée de France, though it undoubtedly presents a perception of the *domus Augusta*, and indeed an important and interesting one. No interpretation I have seen is entirely convincing, but by far the most plausible is Jeppesen (1993), which situates the piece well outside the chronological limits of the present investigation.

[1] Tac.*Ann*.4.57.3; Vell.2.103.3; Suet.*Aug*.65.1, *Tib*.15.2, 16.1; Dio Cass. 55.13.2a; Fast.Amit. (*EJ* p. 49). Velleius claims implausibly that Augustus had wished to adopt Tiberius after the death of Lucius but Tiberius had refused. The Fasti record Tiberius' adoption with no mention of Agrippa Postumus.

[2] Tac.*Ann*.1.3.5, 4.57.3; Suet.*Tib*.15.2, *Cal*.1.1, 4; Dio Cass. 55.13.2a; Just.*Inst*.1.11.11. Justinian notes that Germanicus thus became Augustus' grandson as soon as Augustus adopted Tiberius. On the arrangements of 4, cf. Corbier (1995) 183.

[3] Cf. Syme (1978) 45.

regardless of its truth, relations between them were hardly likely to flourish. The views of Tiberius and his son Drusus on the promotion of Germanicus over the latter might also be a complicating factor, though Drusus could also be regarded as a safeguard against further hostile interventions by Fortuna (Tac.*Ann*.1.3.5).

In this situation it was needful to instil in the minds of the people certain perceptions that might promote acceptance of the new arrangements. First, to establish the idea of continuity, to suggest that the new dispensation of 4 was not the result of failure and disappointment, but part of a broader plan that had been in place from the first. Second, to provide reassurance that, whatever unpleasant surprises Fortuna might still have in store, the *domus Augusta* was prolific enough to ensure its own survival and the survival of that system of government which depended on it.[4] Third, to determine a clear hierarchy within the imperial house, acknowledgement of which would protect the order of succession from Tiberius through Germanicus to a blood descendant of Augustus.[5] Fourth, to display solidarity and unanimity, to deny that there was scope or occasion for dissension within or without the dynasty. That it might prove difficult to reconcile the last of these objectives with the third is all too clear.

The Arch of Ticinum

All of these matters are addressed in the statues and inscriptions that adorned the Arch of Ticinum, dating from 7 or 8 (*ILS* 107 = *EJ* 61). The statues were of Augustus, Livia, Gaius and Lucius, Tiberius, Germanicus and Drusus, Germanicus' sons Nero and Drusus, and Claudius. Several points are worthy of notice. First, Livia's position as the only woman. Second, the inclusion of the dead Gaius and Lucius. Third, the presence of Claudius. Fourth, the absence of Agrippa Postumus. From these facts the alert observer could infer the possible lines of succession that Augustus still considered viable and their order of priority, while the presence of Gaius and Lucius implied that what had happened in 4 was not a new departure or a second choice but part of a plan sufficiently broad from the first to cover all contingencies.

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4 It is noteworthy that from the first the *domus* was an artificial construct that Augustus was compelled to devise by his lack of natural male heirs. Cf. Millar (1993) 11, 16–17; Corbier (1995) 179, 192.

5 On the responsibility of the *princeps* for determining these matters, cf. Corbier (1995) 190–191.

The inscriptions are much more revealing. Augustus is of course *divi f.* ('son of the deified'). Livia is described as *Drusi f. uxori Caesaris Augusti* ('daughter of Drusus, wife of Caesar Augustus'). Her crucial and in rumour baleful role as mother of Tiberius is thus only implied. Yet her advertised status as Augustus' wife reinforced the standing given to Tiberius by his adoption. Gaius, Lucius and Tiberius are all labelled in exactly the same way: *Augusti f. divi nepot.* ('son of Augustus, grandson of the deified'). The desired effects of this are clear. All are ultimately legitimised by descent from the deified Julius Caesar.[6] No distinction is drawn between their Julian or Claudian origins. All are alike sons of Augustus.[7] All this ignores the dramatic events of 4 and the disasters that had led up to them. It is as if Augustus had had three sons of equal standing. What then could be more natural than that when two of those sons unfortunately died the third should stand forth as the obvious successor?

Germanicus and Drusus are treated in similar fashion. Both are *Ti. f. Augusti nepot. divi pronepot.* ('son of Tiberius, grandson of Augustus, great-grandson of the deified'). Again there is no Julio-Claudian divide, again both are seen as in identical relationships to Tiberius, Augustus and the deified Julius. Just imagine for a moment the stemma scholars would construct if this was the only information they had! And this surely is exactly how Augustus wanted the world to see that stemma. The sons of Germanicus provide the next generation, but here perhaps space compelled abbreviation. Both are *Germanici f. Augusti pronepot.* ('son of Germanicus, great-grandson of Augustus') but Tiberius is omitted, as is their ultimate descent from Julius Caesar. The facts that matter are there. Their status as Germanicus' sons defines their position in the scheme, their standing as Augustus' great-grandsons their importance to it. Only Claudius is outside this closely knit, coherent structure, his designation as *Drusi Germanici f.* ('son of Drusus Germanicus') marking him out as peripheral.

Ovid's Tristia *and* Epistulae ex Ponto

Much flesh is added to this carefully articulated skeleton in the poems of the exiled Ovid.[8] In 9 he prays (*Tr.*2.155–178) for long life for Augustus, Livia and Tiberius, and for protracted joint rule by Augustus and Tiberius.

[6] The ongoing importance of Julius to the conception of the *domus* is neglected by Hardie (1983) 190.

[7] For the importance of the link with Augustus, cf. Hardie (1983) 190; Corbier (1995) 185.

[8] Cf. Syme (1978) 168.

Tiberius is now the executive arm, in whose person Augustus wages war.[9] His adoption is suppressed; he is described (165) as *natus* ('born son') of Augustus. In the hopefully far distant future Ovid desires that Augustus' grandsons, Germanicus and Drusus, may continue to follow in his and Tiberius' footsteps.

The idea of partnership is also prominent in *Tr*.4.2.1–16, probably from 11.[10] Awaiting a German triumph, Ovid speaks of *Caesar uterque* ('both Caesars'), that is Augustus and Tiberius, and of the young men who are growing up *Caesareo ... sub nomine* ('under the name of Caesar'), so that *domus illa* ('that house') may rule in perpetuity. Livia prays, in the company of Agrippina and Livia Julia, for the safety of her son.[11] To this picture of focussed and harmonious continuity within the dynasty Ovid adds a touch of a wider *pietas* ('dutiful devotion') when he speaks of the rejoicing of plebs, senate and equestrian order at the victories of their rulers. The treatment of Tiberius' Pannonian triumph (*P*.3.3.86–90) is similarly centred on the theme of unanimous rejoicing. Addressing Augustus as *ducis pater* ('father of the commander'), Ovid proclaims that his joy will be matched by that of the *domus*, Tiberius' sons, his mother and the whole people.

Two years later (*P*.2.2.61–84) Augustus, his wife and son are still fulfilling their appointed roles, with Tiberius extending the empire, while Germanicus and Drusus continue to show promise beyond their years. Here Ovid shows his awareness that it is desirable for the house to be full of Caesars, adding an all-embracing reference to *nurus neptesque pias natosque nepotum/ ceteraque Augustae membra ... domus* ('dutiful daughters-in-law and grand-daughters and sons of grandsons and the other members of the Augustan house').[12] *Pietas* recurs in the allusion to Tiberius' *pia proles* ('dutiful offspring'), Germanicus and Drusus. A comparison between them and Castor and Pollux enables a mention of the deified Julius which takes the idea of continuity within the dynasty back to its founder.[13] The divinity of the imperial house is stressed in *P*.2.8.1–10. Ovid thanks Cotta Maximus for the gift probably of a medallion with portraits of *Caesar cum Caesare* ('Caesar with Caesar'), and *Caesaribus Livia iuncta suis* ('Livia united with her

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9 For the date, cf. Syme (1978) 38.

10 For the date, cf. Syme (1978) 38.

11 For the prominent role assigned to Livia by Ovid, cf. Syme (1978) 44; Millar (1993) 12.

12 Overlooked by Rowe (2002) 19. On the *domus* in Ovid and TS, cf. Millar (1988) 12.

13 On Ovid's attention to Julius Caesar, cf. Millar (1993) 8–9. But Millar is surely wrong (ibid. 12) to assume that *P*.2.2.81–84 refer to the sons of Messalla Messalinus rather than to Germanicus and Drusus, as rightly Syme (1978) 45–46.

Caesars'). Here Augustus and Tiberius are unequivocally called gods three times in the space of eight lines. At *P*.3.1.135 the *domus Augusti* ('house of Augustus', in a literal physical sense) is to be revered as if it were the Capitol.

In *P*.2.8.22–50 Ovid appeals first to Augustus in the name of the fatherland, the gods, Livia, Tiberius, *tibi similem virtutis imagine natum* ('a son like you the image of virtue'), and Germanicus and Drusus, *tuos vel avo dignos vel patre nepotes* ('your grandsons worthy of their grandfather and their father'), then directly to Tiberius, *a Caesare proxime Caesar* ('Caesar closest to Caesar'), and his *numina* ('divinity'). The notion of a long tenure of shared power recurs with another prayer that Augustus and Livia may enjoy long life, Tiberius long remain a son. The copious ramifications of the dynasty into the next generations inspire a prayer that the elder Drusus may be Livia's only loss, while her grandsons survive *cum prole* ('with their offspring'), and *cumque bonis nuribus quod peperere nurus* ('and with your good daughters-in-law and the children they have borne').

Towards the end of Augustus' reign Germanicus begins to occupy a leading role.[14] *P*.2.5.41–56 of 12 or 13 congratulates Salanus on sharing Germanicus' studies and praises the prince's eloquence. *P*.2.1 of 13 is addressed to Germanicus himself.[15] Tiberius' Pannonian triumph is twice mentioned (1, 19–20) before the prediction of a triumph for Germanicus himself, in which, it is said, Tiberius will rejoice (53–60). In *P*.4.5.23–26 Ovid envisages the activities of Sex. Pompeius as consul in 14. He will make the customary greetings to Augustus and his son, but the rest of his time will be devoted to Germanicus: *a magnis hunc colit ille deis* ('he reveres him next to the great gods').[16]

So perhaps it was on Germanicus that Ovid's hopes of improvement after Augustus' death primarily rested. Those hopes are expressed at *P*.4.6.20 (for the date, cf. 15–18): *sacrae mitior ira domus* ('a gentler anger of the sacred house').[17] He had written a poem in Getic on the deification of Augustus (*P*.4.13.23–48). Tiberius is hailed as Augustus' equal (27–28): *esse parem virtute patri, qui frena rogatus/saepe recusati ceperit imperii* ('equal in virtue to his father, when asked he took up the reins of the power he had often refused'), while of Livia it is doubtful (30) whether she is *nati dignior anne viro* ('more worthy of her son or her husband'). Germanicus and Drusus are described (31–32) as *firma adiumenta parentis* ('solid supports of their

14 Cf. Syme (1978) 45–46.
15 For the dates, cf. Syme (1978) 87–88.
16 On the links between Sex. Pompeius and Germanicus, cf. Syme (1978) 156.
17 For the date, cf. ll. 15–18; Syme (1978) 42.

father'), but only Germanicus is named (45–46), with another prediction of a triumph and, significantly, a prayer for the wellbeing of Germanicus' sons (47): *sic valeant pueri, votum commune deorum* ('may the boys flourish, object of general prayer to the gods'). It is here that Ovid aligns himself most clearly with the perceived intentions of Augustus for the long-term future of the dynasty.[18]

In *P.*4.9.105–110 of 16 Ovid calls attention to his *pietas*. His house in Tomi boasts a shrine of Augustus, accompanied by *natusque pius coniunxque sacerdos* ('his dutiful son and priestess wife'), their own divinity enhanced by Augustus' deification. No part of the *domus* is missing: *stat uterque nepotum,/hic aviae lateri proximus, ille patris* ('both grandsons stand there, the one at the side of his grandmother, the other of his father'). Certainty is impossible, but it is perhaps more likely that Germanicus is mentioned first. In the same year Ovid appealed to Germanicus' friend Suillius (*P.*4.8.22–23): *quos colis, exora supplice voce deos./di tibi sunt Caesar iuvenis: tua numina placa* ('Beseech with suppliant voice the gods you revere. Your gods are the young Caesar: placate your divinities.').[19] Later in the poem (63) he addresses Germanicus directly and promises to put his pen at the prince's service, an offer which Germanicus, as a poet himself, should value (65–82).[20] If a return to Rome is too much to hope for, he plaintively concludes (83–88), a transfer to somewhere less remote and barbarous than Tomi would enable him to celebrate Germanicus' achievements more effectively.

Germanicus and Drusus

Tacitus

Literary sources, above all Tacitus, provide ample evidence of the tensions within the imperial house that official representations sought to conceal and of public awareness and exaggeration of those tensions.

Tiberius was bound to bear the blame for the removal of Agrippa Postumus (*Ann.*1.6.1–3).[21] The most striking reaction was that of the false Agrippa, Clemens, when Tiberius asked him how he became Agrippa (*Ann.*2.40.3):

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18 Cf. Syme (1978) 46. Millar (1993) 15 aptly compares the revised version of *F.*1.529–536.

19 On Suillius and other friends of Germanicus in Ovid, cf. Syme (1978) 87–89.

20 Syme (1978) 63 notes that in the latest poems Ovid speaks of Germanicus as a poet and orator, but not as a commander.

21 It had in fact been ordered by Augustus and carried out in Tiberius' name but without his knowledge. Cf. Seager (2005) 40–41.

quo modo tu Caesar ('the same way as you became Caesar'). The murder of Postumus had left both his name and his rightful inheritance available for usurpation; Clemens had taken the name, Tiberius the principate.

Tacitus repeatedly suggests that Tiberius feared and distrusted Germanicus and Agrippina.[22] The troubled situation in the East was allegedly a welcome opportunity to take Germanicus away from the Rhine legions and even expose him to danger (*Ann.*2.5.1). Piso believed that he had been appointed to Syria to keep Germanicus' hopes in check (*Ann.*2.43.4). At this point Tacitus inserts his claim that the court was divided by silent partisanship for Drusus or Germanicus, and that Tiberius favoured the son of his own blood (*Ann.*2.43.5–6), though he adds that concord reigned between the brothers (*Ann.*2.43.6, cf. 26.4, 53.1). It is interesting that her fecundity was one of the arguments adduced by those who preferred Agrippina to Livia Julia.

There is no reason to doubt Germanicus' loyalty. In his speech to the mutineers (*Ann.*1.42.1) he dramatically invoked the unity of the dynasty, urging them to be content with killing him and not to make matters worse by murdering Augustus' great-grandson and Tiberius' daughter-in-law. But he tried Tiberius' patience to the utmost, if, as now seems likely, the German campaign of 15, as well as that of 16, was undertaken in defiance of Tiberius' wishes.[23] His assumption of his second consulship at Nicopolis (*Ann.*2.53.1) is unlikely to have been a provocative act undertaken on his own initiative. But his visit to Egypt was another matter, and Tiberius' annoyance seems entirely justified (*Ann.*2.59.2).

Agrippina's boasting of her direct descent from Augustus was a constant thorn in Tiberius' flesh (Tac.*Ann.*1.40.3). The significance of Agrippina's ancestry is movingly expressed by the dying Germanicus. He tells his friends (*Ann.*2.71.4): *ostendite populo Romano divi Augusti neptem eandemque coniugem meam, numerate sex liberos* ('show her to the Roman people, the grand-daughter of the deified Augustus and my wife, enumerate our six children'). He knew that the claim to the principate of any son of his rested primarily on Agrippina's link with Augustus, and he too, significantly, stresses the number of her children. But he warned Agrippina (*Ann.*2.72.1) to exercise self-restraint and avoid provoking those more powerful than herself. The danger was apparent in the reaction of the crowd at Germanicus' funeral (*Ann.*3.4.2); Tiberius was much disturbed by

22 Tac.*Ann.*1.7.6, 52.1–3, 69.3–4; cf. Suet.*Tib.*25.3; Dio Cass. 57.6.2–4.
23 Cf. Syme (1978) 53–60; Seager (2005) 218–219.

Agrippina's warm reception. The flattering acclamations included *solum Augusti sanguinem* ('sole blood of Augustus'), and prayers were offered to the gods that they might keep her offspring alive and unharmed by the wicked, a barely veiled accusation that Tiberius would subvert Augustus' plans for the succession.

Tiberius' edict (*Ann.*3.6.1–3) proclaimed that it would be appropriate if moderation were observed in the public display of grief. The precedents he cited highlighted the theme of continuity: the restraint exercised by Julius Caesar and Augustus at the deaths of Julia and Gaius and Lucius. The famous epigram *principes mortales, rem publicam aeternam esse* ('princes are mortal, the state is eternal') struck the same note. It was the survival of the *domus*, rather than that of any individual, that was important. Tiberius urged the senators, if Piso was guilty of murder, to take a decision that would comfort *vos vero et liberos Germanici et nos parentes* ('yourselves, Germanicus' children and us his parents'). The solidarity of the senate with a dynasty united in its sorrow is thus succinctly assumed. He insisted on the grief that he felt and would always feel for his son. But he also preached moderation, warning the senate not to expect exaggerated displays of emotion from Drusus or himself and not to misinterpret their absence (*Ann.*3.12.2, 5, 7).

That his arguments fell on deaf ears was inevitable. Well before Germanicus' death discipline in the army had been undermined by a rumour that the conduct of Piso and Plancina had Tiberius' approval (*Ann.*2.55.6). To encourage Piso to reoccupy Syria (*Ann.*2.77.3) Domitius Celer had argued that Livia and Tiberius secretly supported him and were delighted that Germanicus was dead. The people at large had no doubts (*Ann.*2.82.1–5; cf. Suet.*Cal.*2): this was the reason for Germanicus' banishment, Piso's appointment, and those secret confabulations between Livia and Plancina. The underlying implication is always the same: that Tiberius was plotting to put Drusus in the place intended by Augustus for the house of Germanicus.

This is clear in the popular grief and anger at Tiberius' delight in the birth of Drusus' twin sons (*Ann.*2.84.1–2), *tamquam auctus liberis Drusus domum Germanici magis urgeret* ('as if Drusus' increase with children oppressed the house of Germanicus still more'). The low profile that Tiberius imposed on all family members when Agrippina landed in Italy (*Ann.*3.2–3) was similarly construed by most of the people and the senate (*Ann.*3.2.3), *gnaris omnibus laetam Tiberio Germanici mortem male dissimulari* ('all aware that Tiberius was trying in vain to conceal that Germanicus' death delighted him'). Some complained of the inadequacy of the funeral arrangements (*Ann.*3.5.1–2) and contrasted Tiberius' present behaviour with his response to the death of his brother, Germanicus' father.

Minor Numismatic and Documentary Sources

Various documents and coins of the period assert the major themes of the dynasty's self-image.[24] On Tiberius' coins the simple legend *DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER* ('the deified Augustus my father') (*EJ* 54) carried a wealth of meaning.[25] At Carthage a priest boasted that he was the first to erect a temple to the *gens Augusta* ('Augustan family') at his own expense (*EJ* 135).[26] At Gythium festival days were instituted for Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, Germanicus and Drusus, and for the supposed liberator of Greece, T. Flamininus (*EJ* 102a.17–22).[27] Antonia Tryphaena proclaims her reverence for the eternal house of Tiberius Augustus Caesar, greatest of gods, and his immortal rule (*EJ* 352.3–4, cf. 15–16).[28]

Germanicus in Egypt styles himself son of Augustus (sc. Tiberius), grandson of the deified Augustus (*EJ* 320(b).31–32). Likewise inscriptions honouring members of the *domus* regularly record elaborate statements of filiation.[29] These not infrequently trace the individual's ancestry back to Julius Caesar.[30] Coins issued to celebrate the birth of Drusus' twins call him *DRVSVS CAESAR TI. AVG. F. DIVI AVG. N.* ('Drusus Caesar, son of Tiberius Augustus, grandson of the deified Augustus') (*EJ* 91). Coins of Asia celebrated the fraternal affection of Germanicus and Drusus (*EJ* 130a). But it is only with the discovery of the major inscriptions that recorded proceedings at the trial of Cn. Piso and the funeral honours paid first to Germanicus, then to Drusus, that the extent and subtlety of the effort to manipulate public opinion can be fully appreciated.

The Senatusconsultum de Cn.Pisone patre[31]

The function of the principate is to maintain the present tranquility of the republic, which Rome enjoys *beneficio principis nostri* ('as a benefaction

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[24] Cf. the various documents analysed by Rowe (2002) 132–146.

[25] Cf. Grant (1950) 103–108; Sutherland (1951) 86.

[26] On *gens Augusta* and *gens Iulia*, cf. Grant (1950) 92–96.

[27] Cf. Rowe (2002) 149.

[28] On *domus Augusta* and *domus divina*, cf. Grant (1950) 96–98, 104.

[29] Thus *ILS* 166 (Drusus), 171 (Tiberius), 173–174 (Germanicus). Later for the sons of Germanicus, cf. ILS 182–183 (Nero), 185–186 (Drusus), 189 (Gaius).

[30] Thus *ILS* 167–168 (Drusus). The latter is a dedication of 23 by the plebs; the corresponding dedication to Germanicus (*ILS* 176) does not mention Julius, but cf. 178. For the end of Tiberius' reign, cf. *ILS* 160, Rowe (2002) 54. For Gaius as *princeps*, cf. *ILS* 193.

[31] For the present purpose it is fortunately unnecessary to become involved in the question of the precise status of this document. (For which, cf. Seager (2005) 222–223 and works there cited.)

from our princeps') (13–15). Peace and stability are engendered by that continuity of settled rule established by Augustus and carried on by Tiberius. Piso on the other hand (45–47) tried to stir up a civil war, when all such evils had long been laid to rest *numine divi Augusti virtutibusque Ti. Caesaris Augusti* ('by the divinity of the deified Augustus and the virtues of Ti. Caesar Augustus'). He therefore undermined the military discipline *a divo Augusto institutam et servatam a Ti. Caesare Augusto* ('instituted by the deified Augustus and maintained by Ti. Caesar Augustus') (52–53).[32]

Germanicus is praised for moderation. His moderation and patience in the face of Piso's savagery were remarkable (26–27), and the decree's publication (167) is intended to advertise the senate's views *de singulari moderatione Germanici Caesaris et de sceleribus Cn. Pisonis patris* ('concerning the singular moderation of Germanicus Caesar and the crimes of Cn. Piso the elder').[33]

Notoriously, the senate regards Piso's neglect of the *maiestas domus Augustae* ('majesty of the Augustan house') as a graver offence than his disregard of *ius publicum* ('public law') (32–33). Other comments on the attitude that Piso should have adopted reveal similar priorities. He should have remembered that he had been assigned to Germanicus as his *adiutor* ('assistant') (29–30), that he was *adlectus pro consule* ('attached to a proconsul'), and to one with Germanicus' special powers (33–36). In his letter to Tiberius after Germanicus' death he forgot *venerationis caritatisque, quae principis filio debebatur* ('the veneration and affection owed to the son of the princeps'). Nor did he accord to the divinity of the deified Augustus the respect it demanded (68). Indeed he is set in complete isolation from the entire Roman world by his reaction to the death of Germanicus (57–59), *quoius interitum non populus Romanus modo sed exterae quoque gentes luxserunt* ('whose death not only the Roman people but also foreign nations mourned'), and his opening of the temples of the gods (63–65), *quae totius imperii Romani constantissuma pietas clauserat* ('which the most constant piety of the whole Roman empire had closed').

The account of Germanicus' appointment suggests both concord at the core of the dynasty and its hierarchical structure. The situation demanded the presence of Tiberius or one or other of his sons (31–32). But the definition of Germanicus' position hints at Tiberius' conviction that Germanicus needed to be kept under control. Agrippa and Tiberius himself had once

[32] On the link between Augustus and Tiberius in *SCPP*, cf. Rowe (2002) 13.
[33] On the virtues singled out for praise, cf. Rowe (2002) 15.

enjoyed power equal to that of Augustus;[34] here it is clearly spelt out (35–36) that Tiberius' power is in every respect greater than that of Germanicus. But harmony between Tiberius and Germanicus is repeatedly asserted. The allusion to Piso's letter (58–59) describes Tiberius as *patri optumo et indulgentissumo* ('best and most indulgent of fathers'), while the king of Armenia, against whom Piso allegedly plotted (43–44), had been installed by Germanicus *ex voluntate patris sui senatusque* ('in accordance with the will of his father and the senate').

Nor is this the only occasion on which the senate advertises its solidarity with the imperial house.[35] It alludes (90–92) to its clemency, justice and magnanimity. These virtues it inherited from its ancestors, but in particular it learned them from its rulers, the deified Augustus and Ti. Caesar Augustus. So in exculpating M. Piso (100–101) it took its lead from the humanity and moderation of Tiberius.

The first living member of the dynasty to receive extensive praise is Livia, in the awkward passage that deals with Plancina's acquittal (110–119). She is described (115–117) as *optume de re publica meritae* ('having deserved most well of the state') for giving birth to Tiberius and for various benefactions. Her wishes carried all the more weight with the senate because her requests had been infrequent. Her influence over Tiberius is stressed with malicious respect (118–119); the senate believed *principis nostri summae erga matrem suam pietati suffragandum indulgendumque esse* ('that the very great devotion of our princeps towards his mother should be supported and indulged').

The following appeal to Tiberius (123–132) firmly asserts that his grief for Germanicus is genuine and unsurpassed. His devotion exceeds that of all others, and the senate has been deeply moved by the frequent indications of his great grief. But now it begs him to devote all the care he had formerly bestowed on both his sons to the one surviving, and prays that the gods will take especial care of Drusus, realising that *omnem spem futuram paternae pro re publica stationis in uno repositam* ('all future hope for his father's station on behalf of the state is placed in one man').

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[34] The statement in ll. 7–11 of Augustus' funeral oration for Agrippa that no man had greater power than Agrippa indicates clearly that Agrippa's *imperium* was equal to Augustus' own. That is true, regardless of the precise nature of Augustus' *imperium* from 23 BC. That matter, therefore, need fortunately not be debated here. Cf. e.g. the discussions of Roddaz (1984) 339–362 and Ameling (1994) 6–17 (with a better text of the papyrus, but unconvincing arguments that not only Agrippa but even Augustus himself had only *imperium aequum*). For Augustus and Tiberius, cf. Seager (2005) 39.

[35] Cf. Rowe (2002) 5.

Livia and Drusus are then praised (132–136) for imitating the moderation and justice of Tiberius, which led him to show *pietas* towards Germanicus and fairness towards Piso. Of Germanicus' other relatives (136–139), Agrippina is singled out for various reasons: the memory of Augustus and her husband Germanicus, then *tot pignora edita partu felicissumo eorum, qui superessent* ('the many children she has happily borne and who still live'). Augustus' approval is also invoked in the praise of Antonia (140–142). Livia Julia (142–145) is lauded in her own right and for the favourable judgements she had earned from her grandmother Livia and Tiberius, *socer idemque patruos* ('her father-in-law and at the same time her uncle'). All three women are then commended collectively (145–146) for *dolorem fidelissumum et in dolore moderationem* ('their most faithful grief and moderation in grief').

Finally (146–151) Germanicus' sons, with Nero mentioned by name, and Claudius, awkwardly added, are praised for keeping their grief within bounds. Their attitude is ascribed primarily to the discipline imposed by their grandfather Tiberius, their uncle Drusus, and Livia, a comment obviously appropriate only to Germanicus' sons.

There follows (151–154) praise of the equestrian order, noteworthy for its implication of harmony between Tiberius and Germanicus, *de principis nostri filique eius iniuris* ('concerning the wrongs done to our princeps and his son') (154).[36] So too the attitude of the plebs (155–158) in following the equestrian lead displayed not only general concord but *pietas erga principem nostrum memoriamque fili eius* ('devotion to our princeps and the memory of his son') (155–156).[37] Finally the senate expresses the hope (159–165) that the troops will maintain their present loyalty and devotion to the *domus Augusta*, knowing that *salutem imperi nostri in eius domus custodia positam esse* ('the safety of our empire is placed in the custody of that house'), and will show the greatest respect to those commanders who *fidelissuma pietate salutare huic urbi imperioque populi Romani nomen Caesarum coluissent* ('with the most loyal devotion revere the name of the Caesars, which keeps safe this city and the empire of the Roman people').

The Posthumous Honours for Germanicus and Drusus

Choice between the various honours proposed for Germanicus was consigned by the senate to a family council consisting of Tiberius, his mother Livia, Drusus, Germanicus' mother, and his wife, if she was available (*TS* (a)

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36 Cf. Rowe (2002) 75–81.

37 Cf. Rowe (2002) 85–86.

3–8). An arch was to be erected in the Circus Flaminius, adjacent to already established statues of Augustus and the *domus Augusta* (*TS* (a) 9–10). The inscription was to state that Germanicus had defeated the Germans in war, driven them out of Gaul, recovered the standards, avenged the defeat of Varus, and put the affairs of the Gauls in order, and that he had been sent as proconsul to the East, where he had met his death on behalf of the state (*TS* (a) 13–18). The arch was to be adorned with statues of Germanicus in triumph, Drusus *patris eius naturalis, fratris Ti. Caesaris Augusti* ('his natural father, the brother of Ti. Caesar Augustus'), Antonia his mother, Agrippina his wife, Livia his sister, Claudius his brother, and Germanicus' sons and daughters (*TS* (a) 18–21). A second arch, with a statue, was to be placed on Mt. Amanus (21–26), a third, with a statue of Germanicus receiving back the standards from the Germans, near his father's memorial mound (26–29).

The extremely obscure (because extremely badly written) remarks on Tiberius' tribute to Germanicus (*TS* (b) Col.II 13–16) at least assert Tiberius' admiration for the dead prince and his devotion to Germanicus' memory. So too the oration Drusus had delivered in the senate (*TS* (b) Col.II 18–19) was to be inscribed and displayed, *quo testatior esset Drusi Caesaris pietas* ('so that the devotion of Drusus Caesar may be more fully attested').

Overall solidarity was also to be advertised (*TS* (b) Col.II 22–23), *quo facilius pietas omnium ordinum erga domum Augustam et consensus universorum civium memoria honoranda Germanici Caesaris appareret* ('so that the devotion of all the orders to the Augustan house and the consensus of all the citizens in honouring the memory of Germanicus Caesar may more easily appear').

The parallels between the honours now bestowed on Germanicus and those previously granted to Gaius and Lucius Caesar are repeatedly asserted (*TS* (b) Col.I 4–7; *TH* 4–9, 24–27, 39, 41–48).[38] Most interesting is the description of Gaius and Lucius (*TH* 5) as *fratribus Ti. Caesaris Augusti* ('brothers of Ti. Caesar Augustus').

Only a few fragments remain of the honours for Drusus. He too was to have a triumphal statue (*Rome frr.* (e), (f) Col.I 2–3), and again the senate thanked the equestrian order and the urban plebs for the enthusiastic propriety of their reactions (*Rome frr.* Col.II 5–7, 15–16).

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[38] On the importance of precedent in all these arrangements, cf. Millar (1993) 2–4; Rowe (2002) 8, 61–62. On the *lex Valeria Cornelia* in general, cf. Brunt (1961). On the decrees of Pisae concerning Gaius and Lucius, cf. Millar (1993) 2–3; Rowe (2002) 107–118.

Conclusions

The Principate and the domus Augusta

Fundamental to all these representations of the imperial house are the importance of the principate to the wellbeing of the state and the sanctity of the *domus Augusta* as the embodiment and guarantor of the principate.

The very existence of the arch of Ticinum, the identity and arrangement of its statues, and the information vouchsafed in its inscriptions all imply an awareness of these points. The same can be said of Ovid's frequent dynastic rollcalls,[39] but he also specifically desires the perpetual rule of the *domus* (*Tr*.4.2.10), asserts its unity in rejoicing at Tiberius' triumph (*P*.3.3.87), and offers the first recorded use of the phrase *domus Augusta* (*P*.2.2.74). Of the sanctity of the *domus* and several of its individual members he leaves the reader in no doubt.[40]

Of various relevant passages in *SCPP* (13–15, 33, 64–65) the most significant are the praise of the army's loyalty and devotion to the *domus Augusta* (161–162) and the injunction to the troops to cleave to those commanders who showed the greatest devotion to the name of the Caesars, which guarantees the safety of the city and the empire (164–165). The *TS* too advertises the devotion to the *domus Augusta* of all the orders ((b) col.II.22).

Continuity

Next, the theme of continuity, at least from Augustus, often from Julius Caesar. The arch of Ticinum exhibits this preoccupation both in its inclusion of the dead Gaius and Lucius and in the elaborate statements of filiation in its inscriptions. Ovid envisages a protracted period in which Augustus and Tiberius rule in tandem (*Tr*.2.165–177, cf. 4.2.8). In *P*.2.2.61–84 he first celebrates Augustus and Tiberius, then Germanicus and Drusus, and finally Julius Caesar. The images presented to Ovid by Cotta Maximus again combine Augustus and Tiberius (*P*.2.8.1–2), and the pair are still linked after Augustus' death and deification (*P*.4.13.27).

The *SCPP* credits Augustus and Tiberius jointly with banishing the spectre of civil war (46–47) and with the establishment and maintenance of

[39] On the need to establish periodic 'membership-lists' of the *domus*, cf. Rowe (2002) 18.

[40] Thus P.3.1.136, 4.6.20: the *domus*; 2.8.1–9, 4.8.23, 4.9.105–110: Augustus even before his death, Tiberius, Livia, Germanicus and Drusus.

military discipline (52–53). The senate itself had learned its virtues from Augustus and Tiberius (90–92), while one of its reasons for commending Agrippina was the high regard in which she had been held by Augustus (137–138). In the *lex Valeria Aurelia* the repeatedly asserted parallels between the honours now bestowed on Germanicus and those previously granted to Gaius and Lucius (*TS* (b) col.I.4–7, *TH* 4–9, 24–27, 39, 46–48) imply continuity in a manner that recalls the Arch of Ticinum.

Harmony within the domus

The *domus* is consistently presented as a harmonious yet hierarchically structured entity, though membership and structure may fluctuate in accordance with the vicissitudes of time and fortune. The conception embodied in the Arch of Ticinum is relatively simple, since with the exception of Livia the women of the dynasty are passed over in silence. Yet it succeeds in uniting five generations of the *domus*, from Julius Caesar to Germanicus' sons, and three generations of the putative succession to Augustus, from Tiberius again to Germanicus' sons.

The impression of a closely-knit, mutually devoted family group spanning the generations is more elaborately displayed in Ovid. Augustus and Tiberius are consistently paired in co-operative amity; the next generation, Germanicus and Drusus also appear as a pair (*Tr.*2.160–167, 4.2.8–9, *P.*2.2.67–72, 81, 2.8.1, 3.3.87–88, 4.13.26–28, 31–32, 4.9.109–110), though Ovid, as noted above, pays Germanicus more attention (*P.*2.5.41–56, 2.1.53–60, 4.5.25–26, 4.8.23, 63–88). Nor does he forget to advertise Tiberius' goodwill towards Germanicus (*P.*2.1.57–60). Ovid rarely looks beyond Germanicus and Drusus to the next generation (*P.*2.2.73–74, 2.8.45). But he frequently includes the women of the house, Livia, Agrippina, Livia Julia and Agrippina's daughters (*Tr.*2.161, 4.2.11, *P.*2.2.69, 73, 2.8.4, 29, 43–46, 3.1.164, 3.3.87, 3.4.95–100, 4.9.107, 4.13.30). Of these, only Livia is mentioned by name. But it is strikingly characteristic of all forms of writing that privilege the *domus* that, where individual members are concerned, their mutual relationships matter far more than their names. Names are frequently omitted, and, even when they are given, the relevant relationships are spelt out in detail as well.

SCPP treats Germanicus and Drusus as nominal equals (32) but is very clear on the subordination of Germanicus to Tiberius (34–36). Nevertheless, the supposedly perfect harmony between Tiberius and Germanicus and the consequent sincerity of Tiberius' grief for his son are repeatedly asserted (43–44, 124–127, 154–156). The genuineness of Tiberius' feelings is again

vigorously, if incoherently, asserted in the decree for Germanicus' funeral honours (*TS* (b) col.II.13–16), as is Drusus' devotion to his brother (18–19).

That very Tiberian theme, moderation, also serves to bind the dynasty together. Germanicus' own moderation is twice lauded (26–27, 167), while others are praised for following Tiberius' lead in this respect by restraining their manifestations of grief. Thus Livia and Drusus (132–136) imitate Tiberius, Germanicus' sons display the discipline inculcated by Tiberius and Livia (146–150).

The Future of the Dynasty

For Ovid the future of the dynasty, along the lines sketched on the Arch of Ticinum, seemed more or less straightforward and secure, provided no further disasters struck. But the death of Germanicus not only provoked an immediate crisis of confidence but raised questions about the long-term future. The *SCPP* is informative on both counts. For the moment attention is strongly focussed on Drusus, the one surviving son, on whom all hopes now rest (126–130). But that need not suggest any betrayal of Augustus' ultimate intentions. His approval of Agrippina is specifically recalled (138) and her fecundity is commended (139). Its principal significance in dynastic terms was that sons of Germanicus with the blood of Augustus in their veins would eventually be on hand to succeed.

TS is even more intriguing. The immediate relatives of Germanicus appear as a kind of closed circle within the *domus* as a whole. Thus the family council that was to assist Tiberius in making his selection of honours (3–8) was to consist of Livia, Drusus, Antonia and if possible Agrippina. Of these the two last are not named but designated only as Germanicus' mother and wife. The statues on the commemorative arch (18–21) were to be of Germanicus himself, the elder Drusus, labelled his natural father and Tiberius' brother, Antonia, Agrippina, Livia Julia and Claudius, all four defined in terms of their relationship to Germanicus, and his male and female children, not named.

So Germanicus is, as it were, being pigeonholed and consigned to history. A line is drawn under his selectively described achievements (13–15): the defeat of the Germans, their expulsion from Gaul, the recovery of the standards and the avenging of the Varian disaster. This is primarily a statement of military policy: no more of the irresponsible adventures devised by Augustus and executed first by the elder Drusus, then by Germanicus. The placing of the second arch near the tumulus of Drusus, with a statue

representing a fictitious ceremony in which Germanicus received back the standards (26–29) makes the point even more forcefully.[41]

But Augustus' wishes for the succession are still respected. Germanicus' death had at last made it possible for Tiberius to repudiate once and for all the strategic imbecilities of Augustus. But the statues of Germanicus' children on the arch in Rome demonstrate that the place of Germanicus and his sons in the structure of the *domus* remained for the time being unchanged.

And after all, despite further whimsicalities of Fortuna and the best efforts of drink and the devil, a son of Germanicus did succeed. Tiberius died bitterly aware of exactly what he had sold his soul for (Tac.*Ann*.6.46.4). And did Augustus, looking down on Caligula from Olympus, think that it had all been worthwhile? Who knows?

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[41] Of the two standards recovered, the first had been found by chance among the booty by L. Stertinius after a raid on the Bructeri in 15 (Tac.*Ann*.1.60); the other was recaptured from the Marsi by Germanicus in 16 (Tac.*Ann*.2.25, 41). Cf. Seager (2005) 64, 68, 72.

TIBERIUS AND THE INVENTION OF SUCCESSION*

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> The death of the princeps Augustus in 14 CE created a fundamental and unprecedented political problem: who is to replace the dead leader and, more importantly, what precisely is being replaced?
>
> Corbeill (2004) 144

Augustus writes the script for the part of *princeps*. Whereas the dictator Caesar is assassinated, the *princeps* Augustus dies in his bed, in the same room no less as his natural father, Octavius.[1] His heirs, Tiberius and Livia, and Tiberius' heirs, are on stage already. The script is even published, the high-points of his *res gestae* pre-selected to serve as précis and template of the successful ruler. Repetition and continuity have been established as key to Augustus' success: he has rebuilt over eighty temples in his sixth consulship in the city of Rome alone, re-established the older arrangements for elections, attempted, at least, to revive the ancient manner of dress, and restored the works of the great men of Rome's past, dedicating statues to them in his forum, so that, 'he, while he lived, and the rulers of later ages would be required by the Roman people to take the lives of these men as their exemplar'—*res publica reddita*.[2] Innovation has been packaged as

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* This paper was finished in 2009 and takes an idea I had towards the end of writing my chapter on "Representing the Emperor" in Feldherr (2009) and 'runs with it'. I regret that I was unable to attend the 2007 conference on which this volume is based, but am very grateful to Alisdair Gibson for inviting me to contribute nonetheless, and to Mary Beard and Robin Osborne for their reading of an earlier draft of this paper. Any errors are, of course, my own. For ease of reference, I have used the translations of the Loeb Classical Library, adapting where necessary.

[1] Suet. *Aug*. 100.1: *obiit in cubiculo eodem, quo pater Octavius* …

[2] For the temples, see *Res gestae* 20.4, and Suet. *Aug*. 40.2 (elections), 40.5 (dress), 31.5 (great men): *commentum id se, ut ad illorum vitam velut ad exemplar et ipse, dum viveret, et insequentium aetatium principes exigerentur a civibus*.

restitution, and this image of 'strengthening' used to paper over the cracks caused by fears for his health, and by conspiracies.[3]

But what happens once Augustus leaves this earth, and the bedroom that he has occupied summer, come winter, for forty years;[4] when, for the first time, the role of 'Augustus' is played by someone else? This paper interrogates how the ancient literary and visual record manages this change—from *princeps* to Principate.

Tacitus flags precisely this move by the way he begins his *Annals*. 'Kings (have) occupied the city of Rome from the beginning'; Rome is (once again) an altered world under Augustus. Tacitus too opens with change within continuity. He adds: people were 'without fear for the present', as long as Augustus was physically fit.[5] But what about after that? Augustus' grandsons, Gaius, Lucius, and Agrippa Postumus died prematurely. There were rumours that he had only adopted Tiberius so as 'to heighten his own glory through the vilest of contrasts'.[6] It is these particular parameters of similarity and difference that concern me here, the problems that authors and artists face in turning heir into incumbent, problems especially pronounced in the case of Tiberius, the first to follow in Augustus' footsteps. How do they play out? Can they account for his construction? And what about the influence of Julius Caesar, who is credited with the claim that the 'state was nothing, a mere name without body or form',[7] and with whom Suetonius chooses to start *his* story? What kind of 'body or form' ('corpus' or 'species') is lacking; is demanded of a Julio-Claudian emperor?

Scholarship on Tiberius has been quick to acknowledge the prevalence of words like 'species' (outward appearance or semblance), and of 'dissimulatio' (concealing), and 'simulacrum' (representation or phantom) in the Tacitean account of his reign. Ellen O'Gorman writes, 'the predominant element of Tiberius' representation' 'is his repression and dissimulation of

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[3] Bibliography on Augustus is formidable. However, still excellent on the problems he faced, including his history of ill health, is Crook (1996) 70–147.

[4] Suet. *Aug.* 72.1: *Ac per annos amplius quadraginta eodem cubiculo hieme et aestate mansit.*

[5] Tac. *Ann.* 1.1: *Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere, and 1.4: Igitur verso civitatis statu nihil usquam prisci et integri moris: omnes exuta aequalitate iussa principis aspectare, nulla in praesens formidine, dum Augustus aetate validus seque et domum in pacem sustentavit.*

[6] Tac. *Ann.* 1.10: *Ne Tiberium quidem caritate aut rei publicae cura successorem adscitum, sed, quoniam adrogantium saevitiamque eius introspexerit, comparatione deterrima sibi gloriam quaesivisse.*

[7] Suet. *Iul.* 77: *Nec minores inpotentiae voces propalam edebat, ut Titus Ampius scribit: nihil esse rem publicam, appellationem modo sine corpore ac specie.*

thoughts and emotions', and sees his Rome as 'a dangerous play of surfaces'.[8] He is reluctant to rule, absent for lengthy periods both before and after his accession, and displays 'dissimulatio' even on his deathbed—and this, despite a failure in his physical strength and Tacitus' suggestion, just a paragraph later, that he grew less guarded, the longer he was in power.[9] He lacks substance, or rather never lets 'the mask slip'. He is too good an actor, or—in Nietsche's view—not good enough. He 'refuses to become a spectacle'.[10]

This character trait has been well theorised of late. 'The rhetoric of Roman public (and indeed private) life makes physical appearance a crucial factor in self-representation and persuasion', explains O'Gorman again.[11] For her, the difficulties we have reading Tacitus' Tiberius are those we have reading his text. According to Corbeill, this text is a new kind of *imperial* historiography about discovering 'what lies beneath', about 'the Republican model of truth in appearance' subverted.[12] All of this makes sense, but underestimates the peculiarity of Tiberius' position: he was the first to succeed Augustus, and thus, the catalyst of a chain-reaction that confirms the first *princeps* as the first (the one who had 'surpassed everyone in the frequency, variety and magnificence of his spectacles').[13] Before Tiberius, Augustus' name and image, though public property, were his alone; now they were badge of office; not just portrait but paradigm. Small wonder that Tiberius should be associated with 'seeming': he has not only to act like an emperor, but look like an emperor—but not so much so as to be subsumed completely. 'Augustus two', authentic and indisputable, but in an environment in which the original Augustus is still omnipresent, in building and statuary.

This paper re-examines Tiberius' reputation in the light of these tensions.[14] How do Tiberius and his image-makers negotiate them? Not only Tacitus, but Suetonius, will be read from this stand-point, and what Tiberius

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[8] O'Gorman (2000) 78 and 88. Also on 'species' and 'dissimulatio', see Martin (1989) 108, 112, 117, 225, 229 and L'Hoir (2006) 98.

[9] See Woodman (1989).

[10] Corbeill (2004) 145; and Nietzsche (1974) 105. Excellent on 'face' or 'form' (vultus) versus 'thought' or 'content' (animus) is Bloomer (1997) 154–195.

[11] O'Gorman (2000) 81.

[12] Corbeill (2004) 158.

[13] Suet. *Aug*. 43.1: *spectaculorum et assiduitate et varietate et magnificentia omnes antecessit*.

[14] For straight and solid narratives of Tiberius' reign, see Levick (1976) and Seager's revised edition (2005). More sophisticated is Wiedemann (1996) 198–255, and an exciting prospect, Champlin's forthcoming book, preliminary studies for which are online at http://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/papers/authorAL/champlin/champlin.html (accessed 30 August 2009).

does and does not do, given new meaning. Rarely is Suetonius accorded the same degree of attention as Tacitus:[15] it is time that his 'Tiberius' received similar treatment. Not that this is just Tiberius' story. Rather it is a story about how the role of the Roman emperor, and—overlapping but distinct—the Julio-Claudian dynasty, is written. It also demands placing this story into a broader cultural framework. In a world in which there were images of Augustus on every corner, in which his rule established a limited number of body-types fit for an emperor, and in which bodies were routinely divested of their heads and given a different portrait, visual difference and sameness are made more resonant.[16] It is not simply a matter of 'reading the Roman emperor', as most scholars have assumed, but of *seeing* the Roman emperor. Tiberius is part of dynastic sculptural groups, together with Augustus, Livia, Gaius, Lucius, Germanicus and Drusus II, yet is the first member of the imperial family after Augustus to receive an obverse coin-type with all of his titles.[17] He is the one who rises to the surface. In pinpointing the obstacles he has to overcome, or circumnavigate, we chart the invention of succession.

Tiberius: An Emperor in the Making

> A youth equipped in the highest degree with the advantages of birth, personal beauty, commanding presence, an excellent education combined with native talents, Tiberius, as *quaestor* at eighteen years old, gave early promise of becoming the great man he is now, and already revealed the *princeps* by the way he looked.
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> Velleius Paterculus, 2.94.2[18]

[15] It is telling that Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's monograph of 1984 is still the staple. Some of the most sophisticated work is on Suetonius' treatment of Nero: Barton (1994), Champlin (2003). Also important in treating the intricacies of the text as history and attempting to integrate these into aspects of Roman culture more broadly are Dupont and Éloi (2001) 293–310, Langlands (2006) esp. 348–359, Vout (2007) 1–52 and 151–166, and, on his use of statues as a means of constructing emperors as 'good' or 'bad', Huet (2008).

[16] On the recylability of Roman portrait statues, and the routine switching of heads, see Stewart (2003) 47–59. Interested in pushing the implications of this is Vout (2008).

[17] Rose (1997) 20.

[18] *iuvenis genere, forma, celsitudine corporis, optimis studiis maximoque ingenio instructissimus, qui protinus quantus est. sperari potuerat visuque praetulerat principem, quaestor undevicesimum annum agens* ... Note, however, Harrison (2005) who prefers 'insignis' to 'iuvenis'. The translation here differs slightly from that in the Loeb and owes its final phrasing to Corbeill (2004) 160.

According to his contemporary, the historian Velleius Paterculus, Tiberius already looked like a *princeps* at the age of eighteen. It is not just his excellent education and lofty stature that do it ('celsitudo' being a rare word, used in late antiquity to mean 'Majesty').[19] He actively offers up his credentials for everyone to see ('praetulerat'), and anticipates his calling. It makes for a curious claim next to the posthumous accounts of his legendary reticence and inscrutability, not to mention Augustus' reluctance to hand him the reins. Suetonius describes how the latter had even contemplated giving his daughter Julia to someone of the equestrian rank instead of to Tiberius.[20] He is made to seem the last resort. What has happened in the interim?

By the time that Suetonius is writing, Tiberius is no longer one of several candidates in waiting. He has been and gone, cementing his reputation—as have Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and on, into civil war and beyond. Potential to rule is now all about coming after. This might be one reason why, when Suetonius starts his book on Tiberius proper, he notes that his family had added 'Nero' to their cognomina, a name which 'means strong and brave in the Sabine tongue'.[21] The comment hastens the question, 'and what does Nero signify in Rome?' Tiberius' strengths and failings point forwards as well as backwards; they instigate a replication series.

A brief look at the first few *Lives* of Suetonius will demonstrate how replication drives the narrative. In Suetonius' *Life of the Deified Julius*, a young Caesar decides to escape ill will by going to Rhodes, only to be beset by pirates. Once free, he makes for Rhodes again, but does not stay long, distracted by news of Mithridates' invasion of Bithynia. He heads for Asia Minor, 'to avoid the appearance of inaction'.[22] Tiberius' infamous voluntary exile on the same island from 6 BC must be read against this, and indeed against Augustus' penchant for heading only as far as the garret of his house on the Palatine, when he wanted to do anything private.[23] Although he, like Tiberius later, is known to have used the imperial villa on Capri, 'he

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19 Woodman (1977) 97–98.

20 Suet. *Aug.* 63.2.

21 Suet. *Tib.* 1.2: *Inter cognomina autem et Neronis assumpsit, quo significatur lingua Sabina fortis ac strenuus.*

22 Suet. *Iul.* 4.1: *absolutoque Rhodum secedere statuit, et ad declinandam invidiam* ... and 4.2: *Vastante regiones proximas Mithridate, ne desidere in discrimine sociorum videretur, ab Rhodo, quo pertenderat, transiit in Asiam auxiliisque contractis et prafecto regis provincia expulso nutantis ac dubias civitates retinuit in fide.*

23 Suet. *Tib.* 10.1: *statuit repente secedere seque e medio quam longissime amovere.* And Suet. *Aug.* 72.2: *Si quando quid secreto aut sine interpellatione agree proposuisset, erat illi locus in edito singularis, quem Syracusas et technyphion vocabat.*

disliked large and sumptuous country residences', and was sure to be seen in public at the games in Naples, even though his health was failing.[24] Tiberius' options had been formulated long before his periods of sustained absence.

Few of Tiberius' character-traits are peculiar to his rule: take 'dissimulatio'—Caligula and Nero are also guilty of it and of engendering it in others, as it becomes a mark of tyranny.[25] But long before this, on the eve of his momentous crossing of the Rubicon, Caesar is said to have acted 'per dissimulationem'—by appearing in public 'to allay suspicion', rather than to whip it up into a frenzy.[26] 'Seeming' or maintaining an illusion are crucial in making a mortal a convincing ruler, but they are complicated by what has always already occurred. The gap between flesh and blood emperor and his imperial image is triangulated to take in emperor, image, *and* prototype.[27] As emperor upon emperor takes to the stage, each becomes less convincing.

At one point, Suetonius describes Julius Caesar as doing something novel: 'quod ante eum nemo'.[28] It is a freedom that no emperor would easily enjoy once Augustus had turned autocracy to dynasty. He laid the foundations and built the superstructure: for example, whenever he was present at the games, he is supposed to have given his entire attention to the performance, either because he liked it, or—by design—so as to avoid the criticism which had been levelled against his adoptive father.[29] Those who follow have no choice but to 'live in the house that Gus built'. Like Augustus, Caesar had lived in a modest house or been peripatetic, used to carry mosaic flooring with him on his campaigns![30] Tiberius builds a palace on the Palatine, but near to the House of Augustus. Already, the structures were in place, and the question, how to inhabit them. Augustus 'detested poor imitators and antiquarians', not even sparing Tiberius who 'sometimes hunted out

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24 Suet. *Aug.* 72.3: *Ampla et operosa praetoria gravabatur.* 98.5: *Mox Neapolim traiecit quanquam etiam tum infirmis intestines morbo variante.*

25 E.g. Suet. *Cal.* 10.2, although in the face of Tiberius, and *Ner.* 29.

26 Suet. *Iul.* 31.1: *praemissis confestim clam cohortibus, ne qua suspicio moveretur, et spectaculo publico per dissimulationem interfuit* … For an imperial history of 'dissimulatio', with particular reference to Nero, see Rudich (1993) xvii–xxxiv.

27 See Stewart (2007) in the edited volume by Osborne and Tanner. The volume's engagement with Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* makes it and Gell essential reading here.

28 Suet. *Iul.* 26.2: 'a thing quite without precedent'.

29 Suet. *Aug.* 45.1: *Verum quotiens adesset, nihil praeterea agebat, seu vitandi rumoris causa, quo patrem Caesarem vulgo reprehensum commemorabat, … seu studio spectandi ac voluptate …*

30 Suet. *Iul.* 46.

obsolete and arcane vocabulary'.[31] How to get it right and refer back with style? How to assume the mantle yet forge one's own identity?

It is unsurprising that Cassius Dio's version of events should put so much emphasis on Tiberius' rejection of the titles of 'Augustus' and 'Pater Patriae', his refusal to put his own name on any of the buildings he finished, his dislike of pomp and ceremony.[32] According to Tacitus, his absence from gladiatorial games was variously explained, one suggestion being that he feared comparison with Augustus, because the latter 'had been such a good spectator'.[33] In all of the literary sources, Tiberius rejects statues and temples, especially in the early years of his reign; seeks to stall the transformation from man to monarch. Unlike Augustus who always had his shoes and clothes by his bed ready to wear for sudden and unexpected occasions,[34] Tiberius is reluctant to be seen in public. He is not ill prepared. Rather, he knows he cannot win. 'I shall always be the same and never change my character so long as I am of sound mind, but for the sake of precedent, the senate should beware of binding itself to support the acts of any man, because he might by chance change'.[35] This has always been taken as an admission of guilt. But it is more than this—recognition of the role-play that being emperor demands. Seneca claimed that when he was approaching the end, Tiberius refused to hand over his signet ring.[36] Perhaps this was the mark of a stubborn, selfish man. But it might simultaneously hint at his awareness of the burden of succession.

Succession shakes the foundations. This threat is most obviously realised when the Julio-Claudian dynasty finally collapses: same foundations, different house. Vespasian and Titus back-fill Nero's *Domus Aurea* and turn it over to the public.[37] For all that they must continue to carry the name 'Caesar Augustus', their new dynasty requires rupture. But even within a dynasty,

[31] Suet. *Aug.* 86.2: *Cacozelos et antiquarios, ut diverso genere vitiosos, pari fastidio sprevit …. sed non Tiberio parcit et exoletas interdum et reconditas voces aucupanti.*

[32] Dio Cass. 57.2.1 (Augustus), 57.8.1 (Pater Patriae), 57.10.1 (buildings), 57.11 (ceremony).

[33] Tac. *Ann.* 1.76: *cur abstinuerit spectaculo ipse, varie trahebant; alii taedio coetus, quidam tristitia ingenii et metu conparationis, quia Augustus comiter interfuisset.*

[34] Suet. *Aug.* 73: *Et forensia autem et calceos numquam non intra cubiculum habuit ad subitos repentinosque casus parata.*

[35] Suet. *Tib.* 67.3: *sed exempli causa cavendum esse, ne se senatus in acta cuiusquam obligaret, quia aliquo casu mutari posset.*

[36] As reported in Suet. *Tib.* 73.2: *Seneca cum scribit intellecta defectione exemptum anulum quasi alicui traditurum parumper tenuisse, dein rursus aptasse digito et compressa sinistra manu iacuisse diu immobilem …*

[37] See Elsner (1994).

there is rupture when any emperor hands to another: the prospect of a new Golden Age forces reassessment of the previous regime. How can it be anything other than silver? The ramifications of such reassessment are particularly weighty first time round, when the honours awarded to Augustus are unprecedented and unrivalled. Tacitus' Tiberius is all too aware of this: he turns down a temple in Spain, worrying that the reverence paid to Augustus 'will be made a mockery of, if vulgarised by promiscuous experiments in flattery'.[38] Repetition weakens as much as it legitimates, as Vespasian and Titus realise when they re-dedicate the famous colossus that had been begun by Nero, and which had been associated so closely with him as to come to stand for him.[39] Earlier in the *Annals*, Tiberius erupts in anger when he hears how his head has replaced that of Augustus on a statue in Bithynia.[40] This is not just about protecting the past but securing the future of his portraiture.[41] He and Augustus must (continue to) co-exist.

But Augustus was always difficult to live with. Understanding that is fundamental for understanding Tiberius' *Nachleben*. It underpins his absence: his sojourn on Rhodes, his failure to step outside the palace-gates for two whole years after his accession,[42] his retirement to Capri after the death of Germanicus and Drusus, when all attention is now on him alone. For Suetonius, his journey there was made under the pretext of dedicating a temple to Augustus at Nola, while for Tacitus, there were some who believed that it was out of embarrassment in his physical appearance or 'habitus'.[43] Either way, the rationale for hiding is tied to the imperial image. As the Tacitean account continues, and Tiberius remains unable to return to Rome, his only presence there is by written intervention. This written-ness sidelines his flesh and blood person, enabling him to function as 'Augustus' generic.

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[38] Tac. *Ann.* 4.37: *vanescet Augusti honor, si promiscis adulationibus vulgatur*. Also pertinent here is *Ann.* 6.46.

[39] Dio Cass. 65.15.1 writes: 'This statue is said to have been a hundred feet in height and to have borne the features of Nero, according to some, or those of Titus, according to others'. On the question of whether this statue originally represented Nero, and for literature ancient and modern, see Smith (2000) and Varner (2004) 66–67.

[40] Tac. *Ann.* 1.74 and, without specifying whose head it is that replaces that of Augustus, Suet. *Aug.* 58.1–4. For discussion of both of these passages, see Huet (2008) 192–194.

[41] Note that while he was on Rhodes, the citizens of Nîmes had already toppled his statues: Suet. *Aug.* 13.1.

[42] Suet. *Tib.* 38: *Biennio continuo post adeptum imperium pedem porta non extulit*.

[43] Suet. *Tib.* 40 and Tac. *Ann.* 4.57: *Erant qui crederent in senectute corporis quoque habitum pudori fuisse*.

The authors' emphasis on 'species' makes special sense in this context. And not only because Tiberius' absence, or half-heartedness even when present, makes him seem like a *simulacrum* of himself. Tacitus tells a wonderful story about a slave of Agrippa Postumus (formerly Tiberius' co-heir who was executed in AD 14 after being banished to the island of Planasia in the Ligurian Sea off Italy), who pretends to be his master—a pre-figuration of the 'false Neros' who were later to spring up in the East.[44] When asked by an anxious Tiberius how it was that he had turned himself into Agrippa, the slave is said to have replied, 'As you turned yourself into Caesar': and the comparison is bolstered by the information that, like Tiberius, he avoided public places and preferred the cover of darkness.[45] The implication is that Tiberius is also an imposter or phantom, a counterfeit emperor whose only qualification is his costume.

Coinage and statuary make this anxiety more obvious. Julius Caesar and Augustus had each paid homage to the image of Alexander the Great, the former standing in front of his statue in Cadiz in Spain, and sighing that he had not achieved anything equivalent, and the latter garlanding his body in Alexandria.[46] Alexander was the model to which they turned in shaping their autocratic identities. Augustus first sealed his letters with the image of a sphinx, then with that of Alexander, and finally with his own portrait, as though gradually crystallising who he was and what he stood for.[47] Tiberius has no such luxury. His identity had been shaped already; his model was not on foreign soil, but there in Rome, constantly looking over his shoulder. The sustained presence of Augustus, in inscriptions and statuary, and the continued erection of these statues, the length and breadth of the Empire, long after his death, prescribed what imperial power looked like; might even have seemed oppressive in proliferating the kind of classicising contours with, for example, contrapposto and cuirass or bare chest and hip mantle, which had been rare in the Republic. Emperors who died detested, and whose statues were dashed to the ground, risked being re-cut not only into the image of their successors but back into Augustus, pared right down to the roots.[48] Not much freedom here for Tiberius' image-makers.

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44 See Griffin (1984) 214. Also of interest here are the stories about a false Drusus, son of Germanicus (Drusus III). See Tac. *Ann.* 5.10 and Dio Cass. 58.25.

45 Tac. *Ann.* 2.39 and 40. At 40: *Percontanti Tiberio quo modo Agrippa factus esset respondisse fertur "quo modo tu Caesar"*.

46 Suet. *Iul.* 7.1 and *Aug.* 18.1 Also relevant here is *Aug.* 94.5.

47 Suet. *Aug.* 50.

48 See Varner (2004) 22. 30–33, 125, 225–229 (Caligula to Augustus), 61–62, 125, 238–240 (Nero to Augustus), and beyond the Julio-Claudian dynasty, 125 and 260–261 (Domitian).

There was a clear image that an emperor had to fit: an *effigies*. And one which ensures that Tiberius is always a 'try hard', however much he skulks on Capri. That is the thing with a copy: no matter how inventive or imaginative it might be, it references the original. Why change a winning formula? But Tiberius was forty-six when he was adopted as Augustus' heir and not a comfortable candidate for a Caesar-make-over. Augustus' image had aged little during his reign, but might at least be thought to preserve how he was in 27 BC—in his early thirties as Alexander had been when he died. Tiberius' image, in contrast, was not *effigies* so much as *species*: the reality was too far divorced from his own image and that which had already been inculcated by Augustus to seem anything other than a disguise or pretence: *dissimulatio*. Tacitus tells of a growing tendency for people to insult respectable citizens and escape punishment by clinging to an image of the emperor.[49] So powerful were these images. But repetition cheapens.

Even prior to his adoption, Tiberius' portrait echoed that of the young Augustus. His marble head in the Sammlung Ludwig in Basel, dated by Boschung to be as early as 27 BC, and by Pollini (more convincingly, in my view) to 19 BC, has a similar twist to the neck to Augustus' Alcudia-portrait, but in the opposite direction.[50] The enigmatic energy of the Augustan prototype, which ultimately, of course, goes back to Alexander, is quelled somewhat by compact classicism. But the hair and face could almost be a three-dimensional version of how Augustus appears in profile, pre-31 BC on denarii.[51] It takes until AD 10 before Tiberius' portrait makes it onto Roman coinage,[52] but by then, there have already been at least two other sculptural types, the best known of which, Copenhagen 623, long known as the 'adoption type', but more probably created in around 11 BC to commemorate his marriage to Julia, overlapping stylistically with the Primaporta. The twenty-five surviving versions of this type attest to its popularity.[53] After fighting in Germany, he left for Rhodes—a psychologist would say 'to find himself'.

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49 Tac. *Ann.* 36. Also relevant here are Suet. *Tib.* 58 and Dio Cass. 67.12.

50 Fundamental for the typology of Tiberius' portraiture are Polacco (1955) and Boschung (1990). For the Basel head (Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, Lu 252), see Pollini (2005) 63–64. For easy access to Augustus' Alcudia type, see Zanker (1988) 43, and for a more detailed discussion of Augustus' portraits, Boschung (1993).

51 See e.g. Zanker (1988) fig. 41.

52 Pollini (2005) 60–61.

53 Copenhagen 623: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, 1445. See Johansen (1994) 114–115 and Pollini (2005) 65–66, with bibliography.

Tiberius grows up in Augustus' shadow. His potential is measured in terms of similarity. The head which lends its name to type 'Copenhagen 623' was found in the amphitheatre in Arsinoe, Egypt, together with portraits of Augustus and Livia. As with all dynastic groups, comparison is explicit. At 47 cm in height, the head of Tiberius is eight centimetres shorter than that of Augustus, with Livia's being smaller again. He may now be 'one of the family', but is palpably inferior to his stepfather.[54] Once he is adopted in AD 4, his images sustain a strong resemblance to those of Augustus, his coin portraits in particular sharing the strong Augustan profile. It makes sense that when Jesus asks, 'Whose image and inscription is this?', the response is simply, 'Caesar's'.[55] Such blurring was necessary if Tiberius were to be assimilated. In AD 13, a year before his accession, but when his powers were made equal to those of Augustus by passage of consular law,[56] the coins minted by Lugdunum are augmented by a new series. This shows Augustus' portrait-head on the obverse and as counterweight on the reverse, Tiberius in a chariot.[57]

Only once his succession is secured, can he be at all independent. The consensus is that after AD 14, his official emperor type, represented by Copenhagen 624, is more mature. 'Though continuing in the general Augustan classicising style in portraiture, this new type does not attempt to recall either directly or indirectly any of Augustus' specific portrait types, reflecting Tiberius' status now as *princeps*'.[58] But this is to underestimate the extent to which his development has been directed, and to bypass the confusion that remains. It is not only that the dynastic grouping at Arsinoe and others like it remain on display, or indeed that at least one example of the Copenhagen 623 type can be securely dated by inscription to between AD 4 and AD 14.[59] In a relief on the so-called 'Sword of Tiberius', made in Mainz in Germany around AD 15, scholars are split over whether they are looking at Tiberius presenting a *victoriola* to Augustus or Germanicus presenting a *victoriola* to Tiberius.[60]

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54 Rose (1997) 188–189.

55 *Matthew* 22.19–21.

56 See Levick (1976) 63 and Seager (2005) 28–29.

57 *BMCRE* I, 87–88, nos. 506–512 and *RIC*^{2} I, 56, nos. 221–226.

58 Copenhagen 624: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, 1750. See Johansen (1994) 118–119 and Pollini (2005) 67.

59 For this head from the Strategeion at Cyrene, see Rose (1997) 62.

60 British Museum, London: GR 1866.8–6.1. Compare Rose (1997) 24, with bibliography, and the catalogue entry on the Museum's own website, accessed 30 August 2009: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/gr/t/the_sword_of_tiberius.aspx.

These uncertainties are a crucial part of history. All too often, scholars see the material record as providing a supplementary or alternative picture to the literary. And well it might. But it does not run in parallel, anymore than ancient authors shape their versions of events in archival incarceration. Rather it infiltrates and underpins, even as it confirms or undermines, the world of text, lending substance to otherwise alien autocrats. There has been sustained interest in which sources Tacitus and Suetonius were mining. But *Quellenforschung* should include archaeological sources too—not individual sites and statues so much as visual culture: in the case of this article, Tiberius' image-making and its viewing context. To see the use of something like 'dissimulatio' or 'species' as a purely literary device, is to miss the point. It is a response to the environment.

Two's Company, Three's a Crowd

> But the house was full of Caesars.
>
> Tacitus, *Annals* 4.3[61]

As mention of Germanicus and of dynastic groups reminds us, this environment was crowded. This is not simply a case of Tiberius sweating it out until Drusus I, Marcellus, Lucius, Gaius, Agrippa Postumus and Germanicus have died, even if Tiberius' character is said to deteriorate and become less cautious with Germanicus' death.[62] As the story of Agrippa Postumus' slave shows, even once dead, these figures are not easily forgotten. Their lingering presences, and the competition between them, influence how Tiberius is seen and not seen, as powerfully as did the portraits of Augustus. There is also his 'socius laborum',[63] Sejanus, to add to this mix, along with his own son, Drusus II, and the next in line, Caligula. All of them face similar problems to Tiberius in needing to show themselves the 'closest fit'. Breaking rank is dangerous. The emphasis is on family.

The family or *domus Augusta* was a key component of Augustus' status as *Pater Patriae*.[64] But it was also crucial for the future. Without it, he

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[61] *Ceterum plena Caesarum domus*.

[62] See e.g. Dio Cass. 57.13.6: 'Such was Tiberius' behaviour in all matters as long as Germanicus lived; but after his death he changed his course in many respects. Perhaps he had been at heart from the first what he later showed himself to be, and had merely been shamming when Germanicus was alive, because he saw his rival lying in wait for sovereignty'.

[63] Tac. *Ann*. 4.2.

[64] Excellent here is Severy (2003).

and Julius Caesar and those who followed, seemed nakedly ambitious, their adoptions, merely opportune. Honours accorded to his sister, Octavia, and, more importantly, to Livia, who was officially adopted into the Julian family in AD 14 and forged the link between past and present together with Tiberius, helped here, giving imperial power a stronger social dimension.[65] These relations were cemented in marble. Portraits of Gaius, Lucius, Germanicus and Livia shared the same spaces as those of Tiberius, drowning out any particular claims in forced congeniality. Unlike Gaius and Lucius, Tiberius' link to Augustus was not one of blood. He was not a natural Julian like them or Germanicus. These groupings exacerbated the need to 'compare and contrast'; to home in on his idiosyncrasies.

All of this makes the paranoia that pervades the palace in the Tacitean account more understandable. The inability of anyone to trust or read one another has long been seen as a defining characteristic of Tiberian Rome. But it is a suspicion built on intense visual rivalry. Tiberius is not the only Augustus look-alike. Marcellus' portrait borrows the brushed forward locks of the Actium type of Augustus, and Gaius and Lucius' portraits, the physiognomy in particular of the Primaporta.[66] In the theatre at Luna, meanwhile, two equivalent portraits of Germanicus and Tiberius with similar features and *Ausdruck*, of Augustan date, the first turned slightly to the right, and the latter to the left, ask the audience to weigh one against the other. Archaeologists have postulated that there was originally an image of Augustus in between them.[67] Such groupings continue to be created even after Tiberius' death.[68] A panorama of Augustus-clones intensified the 'seeming'.

Of these, Germanicus is the other to stand out. Tacitus describes him as 'contrasting strongly with the proud and mysterious reserve that marked the conversation and face of Tiberius'.[69] His popular appeal makes him Tiberius'

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65 In this article, I have chosen to focus on the men. However, on the imperial women and their imagery, see e.g. Purcell (1986), Barrett (2002), Kleiner and Matheson (1996 and 2000), Bartman (1997), Wood (2000) and Milnor (2005). The art-historical among these have tended to focus on what the image of the imperial woman does *for* that of the emperor rather than *to* that of the emperor. This second issue needs further study.

66 Similarity between portrait types needs to be made to speak louder. But such similarity is hard to articulate. I stay close to Rose here in using the technical terminology of the German tradition, but as a shorthand. So Rose (1997) 62. For the complexities of classifying Roman portraits, see Vout (2005).

67 Rose (1997) 93–94.

68 See e.g. Rose (1997) 152–153.

69 Tac. *Ann.* 1.33: *Nam iuveni civile ingenium, mira comitas et diversa ab Tiberii sermone, vultu, adrogantibus et obscures.*

antithesis, actively making a name for himself and embracing his debt. We see him spy the gulf immortalized in Augustus' victory at Actium 'in remembrance of his ancestors'.[70] When he dies in Antioch in AD 19, Tacitus tells us that 'the funeral lacked ancestral images and a procession', but that 'some likened his end to that of Alexander the Great'.[71] It is as though the two ideas are linked: the absence of ancestral baggage that a ceremony away from Rome demands enables him to conjure up the paradigm that was so admired by Augustus and Julius Caesar when they were shaping their destiny, and yet to function independently of his family-tree as a kind of 'outlier'.[72] Germanicus is the successor, who can co-exist with them; his image is not beset with the difficulties of fulfilment.

Germanicus is never emperor, just father of an emperor (Caligula), brother of an emperor (Claudius), 'the great white hope'. After his death, an arch erected in the Circus Flaminius in Rome represented him in a *quadriga*, flanked by his natural parents, Drusus I and Antonia, his brother and sister, his wife and his sons and daughters. Tiberius and indeed Livia and Augustus were absent. For the first time, it was Germanicus' Claudian as opposed to Julian lineage that was emphasized, a move that separated him from the cycle.[73] Which came first: the kind of sentiment which we find in Tacitus, or this special memorial? In this moment, Germanicus is freed from under Augustus' shadow and made the star of an alternative story.[74]

Tiberius can hide as much as he likes, but can never escape. With the office, he must assume the appearance of *princeps*. He must shed his skin and put on the body and face of Empire. What this exterior looks like is Augustus, and his extended family, each member ensuring that Tiberius remains, however headstrong or unruly, 'a variation on a theme', (not) one of them. Even when he dies, his image is not fixed but further manipulated, its hairstyle, and sometimes its face-shape adapted to echo Caligula's portraiture and thus endorse his succession.[75] Augustus too is open to mod-

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70 Tac. *Ann.* 2.53: *cum recordatione maiorum …*

71 Tac. *Ann.* 2.73.

72 See O'Gorman (2000) 67 for his funeral being 'discontinuous with the past, representing a failure of transmission, a gap which the onlookers have to work to bridge with their complaints and questions'.

73 Rose (1997) 26–27.

74 Brilliant here is Pelling (1993) 78–79 who rightly argues that if Germanicus is a foil for Tiberius, he is also a foil for Augustus, whose 'difference of style is a faint mask for the shared and deeper truth [between him and his successor]'. 'Germanicus and his world serve as a foil for the whole ambience, not just for Tiberius himself'.

75 Rose (1997) 62–63.

ification at this point: his head in the Julian Basilica at Corinth, for example, is similar in its iconography to the Caligulan portraits which were erected with it.[76] The difference is that he is no longer of this world, but a 'divus', ripe for transformation and incorruptible. Tiberius does not undergo apotheosis. Who or what has he become? More than this, manipulate an image of Tiberius and Augustus is unaffected; manipulate Augustus and the whole series shifts with him. Tiberius is a link in a chain: reiteration and rehearsal. Only Augustus benefits as the tail gets longer.

Tiberius, Caligula and Imperial Inheritance

> And when they [the troops] threatened mutiny after the death of Augustus and were ready for any act of madness, the mere sight of [the young] Gaius unquestionably calmed them.
>
> Suetonius, *Gaius Caligula* 9

Every emperor has a different way of cashing out his inheritance. If Tiberius' survival mode is dissimulation, Caligula's is demolition. So much so that he is said by Suetonius to bemoan the fact that his reign was not marked by a public disaster to make it memorable.[77] Not that he began his run like this. The start of his reign signals a restoration of Augustan initiatives, and the completion of building works left half-finished by Tiberius.[78] Only later does he deny his Agrippan ancestry, accuse his great-grandmother Livia of being of low birth, ban the celebration of Augustus' victories at Actium and off Sicily, discount certificates of citizenship issued by Julius Caesar and Augustus as 'out of date', and seem intent on literally wiping history by smashing the statues of Rome's great and good so that they cannot be resurrected.[79]

And all of this, subsequent to Suetonius' famous declaration: 'Hactenus quasi de principe, reliqua ut de monstro narranda sunt',[80] at which point he is said to have ceased acting like an emperor and to have blazed a rather different kind of trail, not as an 'exemplar' but as a 'monstrum'. He is 'too

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[76] Rose (1997) 60 and 138. And for Claudian Augustus with thickened facial features, 82 (Aquileia) and 126 (Volterra).

[77] Suet. *Cal.* 31.

[78] See e.g. Suet. *Cal.* 16 and 21.

[79] Suet. *Cal.* 23.1–2, 38.2, 34.1.

[80] Suet. *Cal.* 22.1: *So much for Caligula as emperor; we must now tell of his career as monster.*

big for his boots', too big for the script that had been written by Augustus and acted by Tiberius. By the end of his reign he has ditched tradition entirely, dressing to defy Roman, male, even mortal convention. But he is now *princeps* no longer in Suetonius' eyes, rather a false god with fake beard and thunderbolt, an omen, both in his dressing up and his treatment of the senatorial elite, of the atrocities, and eventual implosion, of the Julio-Claudian dynasty under Nero.[81] After his assassination in AD 41, some propose that not just *his* memory but that of *all* of the Caesars be abolished, and their temples destroyed.[82] His travesties have almost broken the cycle. Perhaps Tiberius was wiser to hide. Continuity, or at least the maintenance of Augustus' status, is key to imperial identity.

This continuity rests on visualisation. An emperor's status is bodied forth in his honours, his titles, but above all, his smooth marble features and brushed forward fringe. To be hailed 'Caesar Augustus' orally and in inscriptions was one thing, but there needed to be statues to support these claims. Statues stood in for him in the law-court, gave voice to his authority even when he was on campaign or in his villa on Capri, made him a permanent part of the landscape and established his majesty. But they could also be dashed down or re-cast, a Nero into a Titus, or, the other way round, a Caligula into an Augustus. The march of progress could be reverse engineered. Recyclability was built into monumentalisation. All of this made the emperor's image vulnerable. Each of them was only as good as the emperor who came before and after, dependent upon their relative likeness or difference to Augustus, as much as on how they 'worked the system'.

Tiberius was the first to endure this, and as such, is unavoidably tentative. Out of all of the potential heirs lining up to take Augustus' place, he was the one to make it, and to face translating 'making it' into an image of his own. This image had been nurtured as one of many budding emperors. Even outside of sculptural dynastic group, it was defined, confined and bolstered by comparison. Inevitably, his real character was 'very different' from that of Augustus, but 'he did not dare to turn the people who had been indulgently treated for so many years towards harsher things'.[83] He was compelled to follow. Augustus' success spelled out the importance of

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[81] Suet. *Cal.* 52. And on his treatment of the senatorial elite, 26.

[82] Suet. *Cal.* 60: *et senatus in asserenda libertate adeo consensit, ut consules primo non in curiam, quia Iulia vocabatur, sed in Capitolium convocarent, quidem vero sententiae loco abolendam Caesarum memoriam ac diruenda templa censuerint.*

[83] Tac. *Ann.* 1.54: *Alia Tiberio morum via: sed populum per tot annos molliter habitum nondum audebat ad duriora vertere.*

tradition. Little choice but to 'dissimulate', or else run away, as flashes of his true self threatened to betray him. As historians, we should see this not as a weakness but a virtue: Tiberius alerts us to the gap between image and reality.

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THE IDENTITY OF DRUSUS: THE MAKING OF A *PRINCEPS*

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When discussing court rivalries during the reign of Tiberius, Tacitus remarks that Tiberius gave preference to his natural son Drusus over his adopted son Germanicus, but elsewhere he claims that, while Germanicus was alive, Tiberius did not indicate which of his two sons should be his successor.[1] Since Tacitus gives no evidence for an apparent distinction between the two sons of Tiberius,[2] the former statement, of Tiberius' preference for Drusus, appears incorrect. Should we simply ignore this criticism of Tiberius' lack of impartiality, assuming that Tacitus was speaking generally, since it is only natural that a father would love his natural son more than his adopted son, or is it possible that Tacitus is right in his assessment of the relationship between this father and his sons, and that Tiberius did show a preference for Drusus?

I would like to examine some of the key points in the early life of Drusus to establish what his status was in the household of Augustus prior to AD 14, and then I shall consider his position just after the death of Augustus. From this it may be determined whether there was a change in the imperial prospects of Drusus after AD 14, and, if so, what caused this change. Finally, I shall determine what role Tiberius played in Drusus' career and if this might have been construed by Tacitus as preference.

Drusus during the Reign of Augustus

In AD 4, Drusus became Augustus' grandson, but Tacitus indicates that he was included in the new imperial structure only because he was Tiberius'

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1 On rivalry, see Tac. *Ann*. 2.43.5; on equitable treatment, Tac. *Ann*. 3.55.3.

2 Goodyear ad 2.43.5 comments: 'Tiberius' treatment of Germanicus and Drusus showed meticulous impartiality.' Hurlet (1997) 527–531 summarises the archaeological evidence for the honours bestowed equally on Germanicus and Drusus after AD 14; Woodman (2006) 311, 324, refers to the imperial status accorded to Drusus in the period after the death of Augustus.

son and that Germanicus was the scion preferred by Augustus.[3] This seems borne out by the evidence, as Drusus became an honoured member of Augustus' family, but he did not enjoy enhanced promotion.[4] Although Drusus received the toga of manhood in AD 2 (Suet. *Tib.* 15.1), and soon after this would have been of an age to see military service, there is no record of his going on campaign,[5] despite the fact that his father commanded Roman forces almost continuously from AD 4 until 12, and his adopted brother Germanicus served for many years in two major theatres of war.[6] In this, the situation of Drusus was not dissimilar to that of Agrippa Postumus, who had become Augustus' son by adoption in AD 4 but whose career also failed to thrive, but whereas Agrippa's failure was viewed as an anomaly and explained by the fact that Agrippa was temperamentally unsuited for such duties,[7] in the case of Drusus no explanation was ever offered.[8]

In striking contrast, Tiberius' adopted son Germanicus seems to have seen active service from an early age,[9] and he was singled out by Augustus with a five-year advance in the *cursus honorum* (Suet. *Gaius* 1.1). He began his political career in AD 7 as *quaestor*, when he was about 19 years old, and Augustus entrusted him with a measure of military responsibility during the testing time of the Pannonian revolt (Dio Cass. 55.31.1). Although Germani-

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[3] Tac. *Ann.* 1.3.5; also Dio Cass. 55.13.2; Shotter (1968) 195 and Swan (2004) 143 note that Augustus excluded Drusus from inheriting his father's position by making Tiberius adopt Germanicus. Suetonius (*Gaius* 4.1) claims that Augustus considered adopting Germanicus instead of Tiberius, which would have kept Drusus out of the imperial family. The cumbersome double-adoption (Tiberius adopting Germanicus and then Augustus adopting Tiberius) might have been the result of Tiberius' insistence on Drusus' inclusion.

[4] There has been debate on this issue (cf. Levick (1966) 228–230); Levick (1966) 229–244 has argued for Drusus as a serious contender from AD 4 (also Levick (1999) 49–51), a view espoused by most subsequent authorities (e.g. Shaw (1990) 55–59, 63–68, 70–71, 73; Hurlet (1997) 210–211, 486–490, 503–507; Woodman (2006) 310–311).

[5] Dio Cass. 56.17.2. Because of the manpower shortages in the wake of Rome's involvement in major military campaigns from AD 6 onwards (e.g. Vell. Pat. 2.111.1–2; see also Swan (2004) ad 56.16.4), Drusus must have been exempted from military service, perhaps because of ill-health.

[6] On Germanicus' role in the Illyrian campaigns: Vell. 2.116.1; Dio Cass. 55.31.1, 32.1, 4; 56.11.1–3, 12.2, 15.1–3, 17.1–2; in Germany: Dio Cass. 56.25.2–3,26.1; cf. Vell. 2.129.2.

[7] Jameson (1975) 287–314; Birch (1981) 448–455. Agrippa was included in imperial statue groups of AD 4–5, but not after that (see Hurlet (1997) 494).

[8] Drusus was not otherwise overlooked in the family structure, since he was a *pontifex* by AD 7/8 (Rogers (1943) 102; Levick (1966) 234; Hurlet (1997) 211).

[9] When Germanicus served as *quaestor*, he exercised military authority (Dio Cass. 55.31.1), which suggests that he had previously done active military service.

cus and Drusus were about the same age,[10] Germanicus was not only being given fast-track promotion, he was also being schooled in the arts of war by none other than Tiberius himself (Vell. Pat. 2.129.2). In this period, Germanicus, was the up-coming *vir militaris* (military man), and so was being groomed as a potential imperial successor, whereas Drusus, who did not undertake military service nor begin his career early, was clearly being overlooked in terms of the succession.[11]

The situation changed in AD 9, since in this year the senate awarded Drusus the right of attending senatorial meetings, although he was not yet a senator,[12] and, once he had become a *quaestor* (which he did in AD 11), he would enjoy a privileged, praetorian rank in the senate.[13] In AD 9, Germanicus too was singled out for distinction, but he obtained immediate praetorian standing in the senate, and he was given the right to state his opinion directly after the consuls (Dio Cass. 56.17.2). More importantly, he was also awarded triumphal *insignia* for his service during the Pannonian revolt. Germanicus visibly warranted his distinctions, but Drusus had done nothing to merit his, and notably, despite the distinctions, he was not given any advantage in the political *cursus*. The honours for Drusus, therefore, must have arisen for another reason. They were perhaps a means of paying homage to Tiberius, who was awarded a triumph at that time for his victories in the Pannonian revolt. By that time Tiberius had already celebrated one triumph and had been endowed with every privilege that Rome had to offer, and so these honours for his son would have signalled added prestige for the father. Augustus himself had been honoured in this same way, when his sons Gaius and Lucius, although only fifteen years old respectively in 5 and 2 BC, were allowed to attend senatorial meetings.[14] Although Drusus

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10 Their ages cannot be determined with certainty, but if Germanicus received a five-year advance in the *cursus* and was *quaestor* in 7, whereas Drusus held this same post in 11 without the benefit of an advance, then Drusus was possibly the same age or even a year older than Germanicus (Gardthausen (1918) 431–432), but Levick (1966) 236–238 has Drusus two or three years younger than Germanicus.

11 Kuttner (1995) 176 comments that imperial candidates primarily required military credentials.

12 Dio Cass. 56.17.3. This privilege had been given to Gaius and Lucius just after each had received his *toga virilis* (Hurlet (1997) 212), whereas Drusus was in his twenties. Drusus and Germanicus also possibly became *principes iuventutis* in AD 9 (Gardthausen (1918) 432; Rogers (1943) 103–104; cf. Levick (1966) 234).

13 Dio Cass. 56.17.3 (see Swan ad 56.17.3); on his holding the quaestorship (Dio Cass. 56.25.4); on Drusus' praetorian *ornamenta*, see Bosworth (1980) 271.

14 Augustus *Res Gestae* 14. Gaius and Lucius were also singled out for the consulship, to be held after a five-year gap (Swan (2004) ad 55.9.4, 9–10; ad 56.17.3).

was gaining a political profile, the distinction between him and Germanicus remained firmly in place, since Drusus was seen to have gained his privileges only because of his father's military successes.[15]

Drusus became quaestor in AD 11 in his mid-twenties, at an age usual for such an office, but he continued to be overshadowed by Germanicus who, in that same year, campaigned in Germany with proconsular power (Dio Cass. 56.25.2) and later was allowed to stand for the consulship.[16] As such, the military prestige and political influence of Germanicus would have reduced to insignificance the role played by his brother as *quaestor*. Then, when Germanicus held the consulship in AD 12, he did so at an earlier age than even Tiberius himself had,[17] showing further the faith that Augustus had in his adopted grandson. Although the year-long consulship held by Germanicus was said to have been quite ordinary, in October of that year he was allowed the opportunity to exhibit both his consular *insignia* and his triumphal ornaments, when he participated in the triumphal celebration of his father Tiberius.[18] Augustus wrote in commendation of his grandson to the senate, and Germanicus was allowed to read out this letter in his own praise (Dio Cass. 56.26.2). Augustus was ensuring that the people and senate would recognise the exalted position that he wanted Germanicus to enjoy. Drusus in contrast held only reflected glory, as the son of triumphator.[19]

When Augustus renewed Tiberius' grant of tribunician power in AD 13, he also permitted Drusus the privilege of holding a consulship two years later (in AD 15), without his having held the praetorship (Dio Cass. 56.28.1).[20] Once again, this privilege being given to Drusus was redolent of those given to Gaius and Lucius in 5 and 2 BC respectively, when they were guaranteed

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15 Rogers (1943) 104 dismisses the timing of the honours to Drusus in AD 9 as mere coincidence.

16 Dio Cass. 56.25.2; see Swan (2004) ad 56.25.2 who notes the debate concerning whether Germanicus held an independent command.

17 Dio Cass. 56.17.2, 26.1; cf. Ovid *Pont.* 2.1. Germanicus held the consulship in his mid-twenties, having omitted the praetorship. His natural father Drusus and Tiberius had been in their late twenties and had not omitted the praetorship.

18 On the date, see Swan (2004) ad 56.17.1. Drusus and other members of the *domus Augusta* accompanied Tiberius, as he celebrated the triumph awarded in 9 (Ovid *Pont.* 2.2.79–84). See Rogers (1943) 104–105; Flory (1998) 490.

19 That Augustus was omitting Drusus from the succession at this time, see Swan (2004) ad 56.26.1–2. Ovid (*Pont.* 2.2.72) remarks that, at the time of the triumph of Tiberius in late 12, the vigour of Drusus was no less than his nobility, but he more importantly praises the precocity of Germanicus.

20 On the grant to Tiberius and its date, see Swan (2004) ad 56.28.1.

consulships after a five-year interval, and as such, Drusus' promotion to the consulship was publicly linked to the political standing of Tiberius. In the same year, Augustus admitted both Germanicus and Drusus into his inner, advisory group, men who not only gave advice to the emperor but also helped formulate senatorial policy,[21] and in the following year, Drusus was co-opted among the Arval Brethren, an exclusive priesthood comprising the three leading members of the imperial family (Augustus, Tiberius and Germanicus), as well as the other most important men in the state.[22] During AD 13 and 14, therefore, Augustus was finally allowing Drusus to have a degree of prominence. By his influence in the senate, his participation in Augustus' *concilium*, his holding important priesthoods, and the guaranteed consulship of 15, Drusus was fast becoming one of the most important figures in the state,[23] but at this time he could pose no threat to the imperial status of Germanicus, since the latter had already accrued all the honours and distinctions that Drusus was holding or was yet to hold, and he was moving further ahead of his brother, in that he was continuously active in the field, holding commands in Germany and Gaul.[24]

Despite the continual promotion of Germanicus, Drusus received senatorial and popular exposure at Rome at the time of the death of Augustus in AD 14. At the death of the old emperor, a decision was made that Germanicus not return to Rome from Gaul for the exequies of his grandfather,[25] which meant that it fell to Drusus to represent the generation of the successors of the *domus Augusta* after Tiberius. At the first senatorial meeting after Augustus' death, Drusus gave physical and moral support to Tiberius who had collapsed and could not finish reading out a eulogy of Augustus. At this time Drusus picked up and finished his father's speech, and he also later

21 Dio Cass. 56.28.2–3; on the composition and activities of Augustus' *concilium*, see Swan (2004) ad 56.18.2–3. The emperor publicly recognised the power that he had invested in his grandsons when, on one occasion, he ordered them not to say anything in the senate about a particularly contentious piece of legislation (Dio Cass. 56.28.5). On the importance of this membership for Drusus, see Shaw (1990) 75–77.

22 On Drusus' co-option into the ranks of the *Fratres Arvales* in May AD 14, see Rogers (1943) 102–103; Levick (1996) 234–235; Shaw (1990) 77.

23 On the important role of Drusus in AD 13–14, see Shaw (1990) 129–130.

24 Lindsay (1993) ad 1.1. Augustus made his final will in April AD 13 (Suet. *Aug*. 101.1), in which priority was given to Germanicus over Drusus.

25 Germanicus may have decided not to return to Rome because of the fragility of the military situation in Gaul, in the face of a German invasion (Tab. Siarensis frag. 1; cf. Tac. *Ann*. 1.36.2, 44.4, 50.1; Suet. *Tib*. 41), but he may have decided not to move the family because Agrippina was heavily pregnant (Tac. *Ann*. 1.40.2, 44.1).

supervised the delivery of Augustus' will to the senate.[26] During the funeral procession for Augustus too, while Tiberius gave an oration for his father from the Julian rostra in front of the temple of Divus Iulius, Drusus helped carry the bier and he also gave a funeral oration for his grandfather from the old rostra.[27] By coincidence or design, it was Drusus, not the new heir apparent Germanicus, who played an active part in the transition from one regime to another.

The terms of the will of Augustus, however, excluded Drusus from the succession, since Augustus indicated that he wanted *principes* in the longer term to be his direct descendants, the offspring of Germanicus and Agrippina. Augustus did acknowledge that Drusus might have a powerful position in court, since he appointed him heir in the second degree to Livia's portion of his estate.[28] Through this, he was suggesting that Drusus should inherit one-third of the imperial estate at the death of Livia, and since she was of his generation, Augustus must have expected that Drusus would enter this inheritance within a few years of his death. Under such an arrangement, Drusus would become an adviser to whoever was *princeps*: first to Tiberius, then to Germanicus, and, if required, he would be able to help direct the generation after that.[29] Thus, the will made accommodation for the political aptitude of Drusus, but it also emphatically directed that Tiberius should be the next emperor, followed by Germanicus.[30] In AD 14, therefore, the *princeps* had to be a proven military man, such as Agrippa had been and Tiberius was, and such as would be Germanicus.[31] Based on this ideal, Drusus could never become Tiberius' successor.

Within a few years of AD 14, however, the situation had changed dramatically for Drusus. In AD 22 Tiberius is reported to have requested that the senate award Drusus tribunician power, effectively to make him the impe-

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26 Tiberius' collapse was perhaps brought on through physical fatigue from having accompanied the body of Augustus from Nola to Rome (Tac. *Ann.* 1.7.4; Suet. *Tib.* 25.3; Dio Cass. 56.31.3; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 100.2; Dio Cass. 57.3.2). Drusus and the will of Augustus (Dio Cass. 56.32.1a; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.8.1; Suet. *Aug.* 101.1, *Tib.* 23); on the dates of the first meetings of Tiberius' reign, see Huttner (2004) 128; Swan (2004) 299.

27 Suet. *Aug.* 100.3; Dio Cass. 56.34.4–35.1; cf. Seneca *Dial.* 6.15.3. On his actions throughout this period, see Shaw (1990) 84–88.

28 Sources for the will, see Swan (2004) ad 56.32.1a–4; for discussion, see Champlin (1989) 158–159; Shaw (1990) 85–86; Swan (2004) ad 56.32.1, 376–378.

29 Cf. Swan (2004) 376–378. Tiberius claimed that Drusus had been guiding the next generation between AD 19 and 23 (*Ann.* 4.8.4–5); cf. Woodman and Martin (1996) ad 8.2.

30 Swan (2004) 378 argues that Augustus gave no clear direction for Tiberius' successor, but this seems to defy Augustus' accelerated promotion of Germanicus.

31 Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.2. Levick (1966) 240–241; cf. Kuttner (1995) 176.

rial successor (Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.1–2). Tiberius is said to have added as justification for the grant that Drusus had garnered the experience required to assume imperial duties over the previous eight years.[32] This indicates that Tiberius' accession was a turning point for Drusus, since his qualifications extended no further back than AD 14, and Tiberius did not call on the authority of Augustus for this decision to elevate Drusus, no doubt because the old emperor had never given his imprimatur to Drusus to be a successor. It was only after the death of Augustus in AD 14, therefore, that Drusus was put on an imperial trajectory, after which he became a credible alternative to Germanicus.[33]

Further in the speech of AD 22, Tacitus has Tiberius recount the instances that formed the foundation of Drusus' imperial experience from AD 14 (Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.4): Drusus had put down insurrections, had ended wars, had been a triumphator and twice consul, and he was familiar with and already sharing imperial duties. Of these, there is only one episode in AD 14 that is on this list, when Drusus went to Illyricum to deal with a rebellion by Roman legions, and so this occasion must have been the impetus for Drusus to begin his 'imperial' career. On the other hand, Tiberius may earlier have tried a more 'diplomatic' approach to the problem of altering the imperial destiny of Drusus, such as we find on the occasion when he offered to share his principate with others (*laboris participes*), during the so-called accession debate.

The 'Accession' Debate

During the debate that took place after the deification of Augustus (17 September AD 14), Tiberius is said, first, to have expressed reservations about his capacity for accepting the full weight of the principate,[34] and then to

32 Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.4. Woodman (2006) 328. Tiberius is reported to have included other material about Drusus relevant to 22, that he had a wife and three children, and that he was of an age to receive tribunician power (Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.4).

33 The equivalence between Germanicus and Drusus is apparent in the senatorial discussion of the provincial arrangements of AD 17, although Germanicus was given priority because of his maturity (Tac. *Ann.* 2.43.1, 44.1), and Tacitus suggests that there was jockeying for position between the factions of Germanicus and Drusus at that time (Tac. *Ann.* 2.43.5–6; Dio Cass. 57.18.7); on this, see Ferrill (1971) 729; Levick (1975) 29–38.

34 Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.1–13.6; Woodman (1998) 63 acknowledges that Tacitus accurately reflects Tiberius. Both Suetonius (*Tib.* 25.2) and Dio Cass. (57.2.4) claim that Tiberius' first proposal was to relinquish power altogether, but they are concerned here to show his hypocrisy in exercising the power of a *princeps* while rejecting the title, and they suggest that Tiberius

have floated the idea of a sharing of responsibility.[35] Since Tiberius was not suggesting the re-introduction of the Republic, despite his assertion that power should not centre in one man and that many people should undertake imperial duties (Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.1),[36] he was instead alluding to an arrangement in which the only possible nominations to exercise power could be he himself,[37] but also Germanicus and Drusus.[38] With this personnel in mind, Tiberius must have been intending that he would occupy the position Augustus had occupied in the latter years of his reign, while Germanicus and Drusus would undertake more active roles, such as he himself had done in the years from AD 10, when Augustus was in virtual retirement. If this arrangement is what Tiberius had in mind, he was intent on the further promotion of his son, but in this instance, he was asking that Drusus be elevated further than Augustus had envisaged, to join Germanicus as an imperial aspirant. After Tiberius had made this suggestion of a division of power, senators showed their adamant opposition to the proposal.[39]

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hesitated only because he feared Germanicus as a military rival. Tacitus has earlier made reference to Tiberius' hypocrisy and fear of Germanicus (*Ann.* 1.7.3–7), and he repeats the theme of hypocrisy in a comment attributed to Scaurus (*Ann.* 1.13.2; cf. Suet. *Tib.* 24.1). Velleius (2.124.2) gives Tiberius a contradictory position, in wanting to act like a citizen and not an eminent *princeps*, which perhaps means that Tiberius asked not to be sole *princeps*. Modern scholars have suggested that Tiberius' refusal of power was part of the ritual of acceptance. See, for example, Flach (1973) 552–569; Huttner (2004) 128–148.

35 Suetonius (*Tib.* 25.2) indicates that Tiberius asked for a partner or partners, whereas Dio Cass. (57.2.4–6; cf. 56.33.4) claims that Tiberius wanted to divide the empire into three portions with himself in supreme control (Questa (1967) 44–45; Huttner (2004) 129–130; cf. Syme (1958) 690; Bosworth (1972) 442; Schrömbges (1992) 288–307; Woodman (1997) 105–107). Griffin (1995) 67 suggests that Tiberius perhaps contemplated sharing power with Germanicus alone and dismisses Dio's tripartite division as anachronistic; Woodman (1998) 40–52 suggests that Tacitus believed that Tiberius asked for help in governing only on the spur of the moment after earlier stating that he would refuse power altogether.

36 See also Vell. Pat. 2.124.2, cf. 125.1. On the idea common to Tacitus and Dio Cass. 56.33.4, see Ober (1982) 317, 321.

37 Tiberius intended to take a role in the new arrangement for the principate, as he revealed when later in the debate he suggested that the senate should choose his duties (Tac. *Ann.* 1.12.1; Suet. *Tib.* 25.2).

38 Woodman and Martin (1966) ad 56.4. Both Suetonius (*Tib.* 25.3) and Dio Cass. (57.3.1) link Tiberius' request for a partner with the (rebellious) offer of power to Germanicus by his soldiers, and Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.14.3) concludes the debate with a curt reference to Germanicus and Drusus, which indicates that there was an indirect association of Germanicus with this debate. See Griffin (1995) 39–41. Before the 'accession' debate, Tiberius would have had time to confer with Germanicus over his intended agenda for the discussion (Woodman (1998) 57, 61), and he may even have offered Germanicus the principate and been refused (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 25.2).

39 Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.3. Whether or not senators saw through Tiberius' request but pretended

At this point in the debate, to show his *bona fides* and no doubt to drive the discussion in the direction he wanted, Tiberius had official documentation brought into the senate, which he considered demonstrated the overwhelming burden of the principate, and he had this material read out by Drusus.[40] Despite this, there was on-going opposition, and so Tiberius tried to win over the senate by conceding to it the choice of part to be assigned to him (and presumably which roles would be attributed to others), but even this sweeping concession to senatorial power was rejected by the leading men of the reign, first by Asinius Gallus, but then later by Lucius Arruntius, Quintus Haterius and Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus.[41]

In opposing the idea of shared power, Gallus reportedly asked Tiberius exactly what role he envisaged for himself in the proposed new arrangement,[42] but Tiberius responded that he did not feel it appropriate for him to choose which duties he should undertake.[43] In effect, Tiberius was asking the senate to support his idea, but Gallus is then said to have claimed that Tiberius' refusal to nominate his own role was evidence that imperial rule could not be divided, his logic being that, if Tiberius could not choose how to make such a division, then the principate could not be divided. Gallus' deduction was blatantly not true, since Tiberius and Augustus had been operating for the previous few years with just such an arrangement in place, as already noted (Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.1). In addition, Gallus' concluding remarks, praising Augustus and reminding Tiberius of his successes in both military and civic life, in essence stressed how well the system had worked when Tiberius had exercised responsibilities delegated to him by Augustus.[44] The objection offered by Gallus did not prove that imperial power was indivisible (in fact the opposite), but his determination to resist Tiberius' proposal gave a lead for others to follow.[45]

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that they did not is immaterial, since it was their opposition, not their hypocrisy that would have been recorded. See Luce (2000) 501.

40 Dio Cass. 56.33.3–4; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.3–4. Drusus has a relatively high profile in Dio's account of this period, whereas Tacitus seems to ignore him.

41 On Tiberius' offer to the senate, see Tac. *Ann.* 1.12.2–13.5; Suet. *Tib.* 25.2; Dio Cass. 57.2.5. According to Suetonius (*Tib.* 24.1), this opposition came from Tiberius' friends.

42 Confusion about the details of Tiberius' position is evident in the account by the contemporary Velleius (2.124.2).

43 Tac. *Ann.* 1.12.2; Dio Cass. 57.2.5–6. Tiberius added that he wanted to be excused from this task altogether, as Dio's account clearly indicates.

44 Tac. *Ann.* 1.12.2. The reference to Augustus brings to mind Tiberius' insistence in other situations of adhering by his precedent. See Shotter (1966) 209–210.

45 Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.12.3) and Dio Cass. (57.2.6–7) claim that Gallus irritated Tiberius by unmasking his hypocrisy. See Woodman (1998) 51–52.

If this depiction of the senatorial meeting reflects the actual tenor of the debate, it would seem that Gallus diverted the senate from discussing Tiberius' proposal. He did this perhaps because he had realised that Tiberius wanted both of his sons as associates, as Tiberius had made clear, first, by having given such an active role in the proceedings to Drusus, and also by having had Germanicus' command listed as an item of further debate.[46] While Germanicus had enjoyed a successful military career, he had not yet been deployed in a truly independent command, and Drusus had avoided military service altogether and was yet to exercise power (*imperium*).[47] Germanicus and Drusus were still very young (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.46.1), and the latter had not occupied any position higher than quaestor. Gallus, as a leading senator but also a relative of the two men, was in a good position to know their weaknesses.[48] This intervention prevented any debate about the merits of Tiberius' proposal, and so whether Drusus should be considered as a potential successor.[49] In addition, Gallus strongly hinted that the senate was not yet ready to accept any associates in power (*socii imperii*) who did not have all the skills that Tiberius had developed through his long years of service under Augustus, both civic and military.

After other leading men weighed into the debate on the side of Gallus, Tiberius grudgingly acknowledged that he could not resist the will of the senate, and he stopped refusing to accept the principate (cf. Vell. 2.124.2).[50] Later in the session, at the request of Tiberius, Germanicus was given a special command, and a delegation of senators was sent to notify him of this and to commiserate with him on the death of Augustus.[51] As is clear

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[46] Tiberius perhaps hinted that he wanted tribunician power bestowed upon Germanicus and Drusus by having called this meeting by virtue of that same power. On Tiberius' use of tribunician power, see Seager (2005) 43.

[47] Tac. *Ann.* 1.12.3; cf. Dio Cass. 57.2.6. When Tiberius gave Drusus tribunician power in 22, it was Drusus' wide experience that Tiberius stressed (Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.4).

[48] Gallus was married to Vipsania Agrippina, Drusus' mother, and he considered Drusus like his son (Dio Cass. 57.2.7). Shaw (1990) 49 proposes that Drusus may even have lived with Gallus during Tiberius' period in Rhodes. Vipsania was also Germanicus' sister-in-law, and so Gallus would also have been on intimate terms with Germanicus too (on the weakness of youth, see Eyben (1993) 67).

[49] The lack of senatorial debate has influenced the sources to disregard the essence of Tiberius' proposal (Vell. 2.124.2; Tac. *Ann.* 1.7.11–14; Suet. *Tib.* 24.1, 25.2; Dio Cass. 57.2.5). Flach (1973) 552–569 examines the motives given to Tiberius by each of the sources and concludes that they have been heavily influenced by the negative traditions about Tiberius.

[50] Velleius (2.124.2) claims that Tiberius gave in to the senate because he saw that, what he did not undertake to safeguard, might perish. On Tiberius' acceptance and hypocrisy, see also Tac. *Ann.* 1.7.5, 1.13.4; Suet. *Tib.* 24.2; Dio Cass. 57.2.3–4; cf. Woodman (1998) 39 ff.

[51] Although Germanicus held a command in Gaul (Vell. Pat. 2.123.1; Tac. *Ann.* 1.3.5; cf. 1.7.6,

from its dealings concerning Germanicus, the senate was not opposed to his developing his military experience by taking on an important independent command. It was perhaps only Drusus in whom the senate had expressed a vote of 'no confidence'.[52]

At the time of his accession, Tiberius may have tried to break away from the rigid mould established by Augustus, of a single *princeps*, and to include his sons in a power-sharing arrangement and to have their role as his associates legitimised (e.g. Strabo 6.4.2).[53] For the senate to have accepted this proposal, however, it would have meant setting aside the intention of Augustus, that only Germanicus and his descendants hold power. Although Drusus was set to gain experience *in toga* as consul in AD 15, he perhaps still had to prove his worth as a military man, and until such time as he did, the senate wanted him to remain outside the line of succession.[54]

Drusus and the Mutiny in Illyricum

It is reported that, soon after the death of Augustus, three Roman legions in Illyricum decided to take advantage of the change of emperors to improve their conditions of service.[55] Although this mutiny was viewed as extremely threatening to Rome and dangerous in itself, particularly when a second and larger mutiny by the Rhine legions erupted as well,[56] after the initial outbreak of trouble, the commander on the spot, Blaesus, had managed to re-establish his authority over the men, and he had convinced the soldiers to submit their demands to Rome.[57] It was only after the deputation from the

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2.5.2; cf. Suet. *Gaius* 8.3; Oros. 7.4.1), he was perhaps in AD 14 elevated to supreme commander (Tac. *Ann.*1.31.2). Previously, he had been *legatus pro praetore* (Syme (1984) 1210). See also Koestermann (1963) ad 1.14.3; Timpe (1968) 35–38; Goodyear (1972) ad 1.14.3; Woodman (1977) ad 123.1; Lindsay (1993) ad 1.1.

52 Tiberius may have sarcastically referred to the senate's lack of confidence in Drusus in AD 17, when he claimed that Drusus was not mature enough to hold the province of Syria, a sinecure, but was able to govern Illyricum, a more difficult posting (Tac. *Ann.* 2.43.1, 44.1–2).

53 Woodman (1998) 158–159, 239.

54 Dio Cass. (57.7.3) remarks that, after this, Drusus played the part of a senator like the rest, giving his opinion when asked and in turn, suggesting that he was intending to 'learn the ropes'.

55 Vell. 2.125.2; Tac. *Ann.* 1.16–17; Suet. *Tib.* 25.2; Dio Cass. 57.4.1–2.

56 On the impression of danger given by the ancient sources, see Vell. 2.125.1–2; Tac. *Ann.* 1.46; Suet. *Tib.* 25.1. Modern sources have questioned the importance given to the Pannonian mutiny by Tacitus. See Woodman (2006) 303–304.

57 According to Tacitus, the initial requests were reasonable: that the length of military service be limited to sixteen years; and that the men having served this time be discharged immediately (Tac. *Ann.* 1.18–19; cf. Suet. *Tib.* 25.2; Dio Cass. 57.4.3).

soldiers had left for Rome that the rebellion gained new strength, at which time Blaesus and his officers lost control of the situation (Tac. *Ann.* 1.20–23, 24–25), but the original deputation from Illyricum had almost certainly reached Rome before news of the renewed outbreak.

Tiberius decided to send his son to deal with the rebellion, although Drusus, as it seems, had never been inside a military camp.[58] With the emperor's son, however, went a contingent of supporters and soldiers. First, there were high ranking senators and equestrians, some of these Tiberius' friends, to be guardians and advisers to Drusus, and Tiberius also sent along two cohorts of the praetorian guard, augmented by picked troops, as well as a large segment of the praetorian cavalry and a number of his own bodyguard (Tac. *Ann.* 1.24.1–2).[59] The main purpose of Drusus' mission was to relay information to the soldiers in Illyricum, that the emperor was going to put their grievances to the senate, but Drusus was also to be allowed some role in the negotiations.[60] Tiberius must have gauged that this was an ideal opportunity for his son to lead troops in the field, who in this case were experienced praetorian guardsmen, and for Drusus to gain the trust and affection of legionary soldiers by making some minor concessions to them. Since the expedition comprised his son and some of his friends, and the number of guardsmen would not have been sufficient to counter a mutiny by three legions, Tiberius must have been expecting that the soldiers in Illyricum would receive this embassy positively.

If Velleius is to be believed, however, the situation in Illyricum had become extremely dangerous by the time that the expedition arrived, 'Drusus … had been sent by his father into a veritable furnace of a military disturbance, which had been ignited by an intense passion'.[61] When Drusus and his entourage entered the camp, they were confronted by a mass of

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[58] See Tac. *Ann.* 1.24.1–3, 47.2; on Drusus' inexperience, see Tac. *Ann.* 2.44.1. Drusus was probably sent as *legatus Augusti*, as noted by Rogers (1943) 107, as he was not given independent power (Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.3). Drusus' journey has been dated to the end of September because of the mention of an eclipse by Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.28.1) and Dio Cass. (57.4.4–5), but there are difficulties with the dating (Flach (1973) 555–559).

[59] Tacitus claims that the praetorian prefect Sejanus was included in the embassy to act as Drusus' *rector* (Tac. *Ann.* 1.24.1–2), but this is unlikely, as *rector* is used of an experienced man in charge of a young man, one usually under 25 (Eyben (1993) 69–72). Sulpicius Quirinius was *rector* to C. Caesar (Tac. *Ann.* 3.48.2; Woodman and Martin (1996) ad 3.48.2; Gingras (1992) 252–253); M. Lollius was also *rector* to C. Caesar (Suet. *Tib.* 12.3); Seneca and Burrus were Nero's rectors (Tac. *Ann.* 13.2.1). In AD 22 Drusus, as *princeps*, was considered a *rector* to the state (Tac. *Ann.* 3.59.4).

[60] Such was the content of a letter read by Drusus to the soldiers (Tac. *Ann.* 1.25.3).

[61] Vell. 2.125.4. My translation.

disaffected soldiers,[62] and although Drusus attempted to negotiate with them, the rebels insisted that he accept all their terms, which he refused to do.[63] At this, the soldiers became enraged and prevented any of Drusus' party from leaving the camp,[64] but despite the difficult situation, during the night, Drusus and Blaesus regained control over the troops, and by the following day, the blockade was lifted.[65] Drusus then promised to intercede for them with Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* 1.29.2), and he remained in the camp until the legionaries had gone into winter quarters (Tac. *Ann.* 1.30.5).

When Tiberius reported news to the senate of the termination of the two mutinies, one in Illyricum and the other in Germany, he is said to have given more praise to Germanicus than to Drusus,[66] but he also authorised the soldiers in Illyricum to have the same benefits as those given to the men in Germany, which Drusus had promised might come to them (Tac. *Ann.* 1.52.3).[67] Although Tiberius gave primacy to the actions of Germanicus, this was no doubt because Germanicus was holding an independent command, whereas Drusus was not, yet the fact that Tiberius tabled the actions of his sons at the same time and gave equal benefits to the soldiers in Illyricum and Germany reveals that he was putting the efforts of both of his sons on a par.

Even if much in the account of the mutiny in Illyricum has been exaggerated,[68] Drusus does seem to have shown exemplary courage, determination and dedication to duty.[69] Tiberius had sent the mission into a trap, but by his outstanding and aggressive leadership, Drusus saved himself and his entourage from certain disgrace or even death, and he helped the commander Blaesus reassert military discipline in a context that might had extremely detrimental consequences for the Empire, and so he showed to the Roman

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62 Vell. 2.125.4; Tac. *Ann.* 1.24–25. Woodman (2006) 306 casts doubt on Tacitus' details.

63 Velleius (2.125.4) comments on the danger to Drusus and his fearlessness; also note Tac. *Ann.* 1.25.1–2.

64 It is claimed that the leading senator Lentulus was trying to get away (Tac. *Ann.* 1.27.1–2), but it seem more plausible that the whole party was attempting to get out. Woodman (2006) 305–306, casts doubt on the details of the attack on Lentulus and other related material.

65 Vell. 2.125.4–5; Tac. *Ann.* 1.28; Dio Cass. 57.4.4. Velleius notes the decisive action by Drusus and Blaesus, while Tacitus and Dio report that the soldiers were cowed by an eclipse. On the implausibility of the eclipse having had a significant role to play, see also Goodyear (1972) ad 1.28.1; cf. Woodman (2006) 307.

66 Tac. *Ann.* 1.52.3; Dio Cass. 57.6.2, 4.

67 These benefits, conferred to put Drusus and Germanicus on equal footing, were removed the following year. See Woodman (2006) 328.

68 Woodman (2006) 303–308, 312–319.

69 Shotter (1968) 198.

world that he was a *vir militaris*. Because of his exploits in Illyricum, Drusus changed his imperial destiny, putting himself in line for the succession.

Conclusion

The preference that Tiberius showed to Drusus must be understood in the context of Augustus' will. According to this, Drusus was to be excluded from succession, and Germanicus was to follow Tiberius as *princeps*. During the lifetime of Augustus, Drusus did not pursue a military career, but to honour Tiberius he was given distinctions and eventually some acceleration in the *cursus honorum*, but the latter did not change his prospects, since Augustus ensured that Germanicus enjoyed imperial honours. In this period, therefore, the identity of Drusus was intimately tied to that of his father.

In AD 14, however, Tiberius did his utmost to change Drusus' prospects, first, by suggesting to the senate that both Germanicus and Drusus join him as *principes*, but when this idea was opposed, he decided that Drusus should embark on a military career. Drusus was sent from Rome to deal with a revolt by soldiers in Illyricum, and he handled the situation brilliantly, which enabled him to be considered a *vir militaris*. From that point in AD 14, Drusus gained a new identity as *princeps*-in-training.

Tacitus is correct in his seemingly contradictory assessment of Tiberius' preference. Tiberius displayed his partiality towards Drusus by making him virtually the equal of Germanicus in AD 14, against the actions and wishes of Augustus. From that point, however, Tiberius showed impartiality, since he promoted his sons at the same rate and, until Germanicus' death, he did not indicate which of his sons was his heir.

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THE LOUSY REPUTATION OF PISO

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Self-deprecation is a standard posture in classical praise discourse, so when an author says he is flaunting his attitude and not his poetry, an audience experienced in the manners of rhetoric would not be surprised.[1]

> quod si digna tua minus est mea pagina laude
> at voluisse sat est; animum, non carmina, iacto.
>
> But if my pages are less than worthy of your praise, it is enough to have been willing; it is my disposition, not my poetry, I'm showing off.[2] (214–215)

But ironically, this particular version of the claim to literary inadequacy is not much thought to have had a hollow ring. When at the poem's close, the author confesses his own youth (*nondum vicesima venerit aestas* 'my twentieth summer has not yet come', 261), in the critical eye the poem becomes a curiosity of juvenilia—variously labelled 'minor', 'odd', 'intriguing'.[3] Di Brazzano's commentary of 2004 provides very full consideration of the poem's literary pedigree, but the history of the scholarship of the so-called *Laus Pisonis* has generally pursued other questions, most notably ones of its date, author and political ideology.[4] These problematic and related issues are rightly detaining, and perhaps inevitably, the poem has ended up an 'also-ran' of Latin literary history, conveniently paired with the *Laus Messallae* as an early example of the verse panegyric form that awaited the sure hand of Statius or Claudian to ascend to the literary canon.[5]

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[1] On a speaker's insistence on his own inadequacy, see Menander Rhetor *Basilikos Logos*; for some examples from surviving speeches, see *Pan.Lat* II(12)1.3, III(11)1.2, IV(10)1.1, VI(7)1.1, VIII(4)1.3, IX(5)1.2, XII(9)1.2.

[2] Translations are my own.

[3] Champlin (1989) 101, quoting Goodyear; Green (2010).

[4] For its title, see Di Brazzano (2004) 147; for its date, see Bell (1985), Champlin (1989), Di Brazzano (2004) 84 and Green (2010); Vergil, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Saleius Bassus, and Calpurnius Siculus are systematically considered (and rejected) as possible authors by Di Brazzano (2004) 64–84, on ideology; see Leppin (1992).

[5] Eg. Dewar (1996) xxiii. A text and English translation appear in the *Minor Latin Poets* Loeb.

The poem offers praise to a man called Piso. After Ted Champlin's detailed and discursive article of 1989, that addressee/ *laudandus* is generally and confidently identified as Calpurnius Piso, the conspirator of AD 65 in the disastrous coup against Nero. Since Champlin, it has also been widely accepted that the poem dates to AD 39/40—that is, long before the coup for which Piso is best known to posterity.[6] If this date is accepted, the poem offers an impression of a conspirator in the making, but can have no evidential value for the attempted coup itself. On the other hand, if Steve Green's championing of a publication date late in Nero's reign is upheld, the *Laus Pisonis* could be read as part of a movement agitating for regime change.[7]

This discussion accepts the identification of the *laudandus* as Calpurnius Piso, but remains agnostic about the poem's date. My interest here is in the immediate reception of the *Laus Pisonis*—that is in the eighty years or so after its composition. Essentially what I offer is a review of responses to the *Laus Pisonis* in the literature of the three succeeding generations or so, and to use that as an example of the vitality and durability of literary praise in Roman high culture. What of wider significance I would like to suggest is that whether it entertained such aspirations or not, in the instance of the *Laus Pisonis*, panegyric exercised a key role in the formation of opinion rather earlier in imperial history than is generally assumed. The survival of this text to the mediaeval period, in part mixed up in the *Vergilian Appendix* and also in the *Florilegium Gallicum*, is testament to some enthusiasm for it amongst much later readers, but by then, of course, dedicated verse panegyric had a different cachet, a post Late Antiquity respectability.[8] It is the text's earlier readers I am concerned with here, those whose interest in the *Laus Pisonis* could not have been in it as a juvenile eccentricity.

The poem is an appeal to Piso to act as literary patron to the poet, in the manner of Maecenas to Vergil, Varius and Horace (230–261). Given its ambition, the poem is distinctly lop-sided. The poet knows lots of information about Piso—his ancestors (2–24), his legal oratory (25–80), his conduct as a patron (81–136), his leisure activities (137–208)—but perhaps surprisingly, in his petition, he discloses almost nothing about himself, except in the last few lines a confession of his own humble circumstances and his tender age. It seems likely that the poem was designed to open the door for a conversation or interview between the two of them, for Piso to get to know his young

6 Di Brazzano (2004), Leppin (1992).
7 Green (2010).
8 Di Brazzano (2004) 11–22.

laudator a bit better, and may be to grant his wish for literary patronage. Certainly the argument seems carefully constructed to further this end:

> diligis ex aequo, nec te fortuna colentum
> natalesve movent: probitas spectatur in illis
>
> You love them as an equal. Neither the wealth of your clients nor their birth move you; you look for virtue in them (113–114)

The commendation of the value Piso is said to have put on the moral worth of his clients and the disregard he had for their wealth or social status and his treatment of them as equals in friendship sets the poet up for his closing petition, where his own circumstances and qualities are brought out:

> nos humilis domus, at sincera, parentum
> et tenuis fortuna sua caligine celat.
> possumus impositis caput exonerare tenebris
> et lucem spectare novam, si quid modo laetus
> adnuis et nostris subscribis, candide, votis
>
> My parents' humble but sincere home and our scanty means hide me in darkness. I can lift the shadows surrounding my head and catch sight of new light, if you happily approve, and support my hopes, o bright one. (254–258)

The poet this makes a strong case for a persuasive 'fit' between Piso's general practice and his own petition. Apart from occasional vocatives (eg. 2, 65, 75, 129, 253[9]) the poem has no clues as to its performance context; the vocatives affect live performance, at a public recitation or perhaps in Piso's house, but if so, it is not clear how the young, and un-commissioned poet gained himself a chance to impress.[10] Another possibility is that the poet sent a copy of his work to Piso, hoping that that unsolicited act would provoke a suitable invitation. That is, either live performance or textual submission are plausible scenarios; what is harder to gauge is how widely available the poem was to later readers, who cannot have been at whatever constituted the premiere.

The scholarly problem here is the appropriate value to attach to claims for stylistic, verbal and thematic similarities between the *Laus Pisonis* and other Latin poetry. Statius is an interesting case in point. In his commentary on *Silvae* 5, Bruce Gibson adduces several parallels from the *Laus Pisonis*, such as *Laus Pisonis* 55 and *Silvae* 5.2.109 on the stunning effect of the oratory

9 Di Brazzano (2004) 150.

10 Hardie (1983) 38.

of the *laudandus* in court; and *Laus Pisonis* 57–64 and *Silvae* 5.3.114 on the *laudandus* outdoing Homeric characters in oratory.[11] Taken cumulatively, parallels such as these could be used to support various claims: for common authorship; for Statius' acquaintance with the *Laus Pisonis*; or, more cautiously, for a common rhetorical education, which recommended deployment of well-known *topoi*.[12] If the *Laus Pisonis* was available to poets of the later Julio-Claudian period and succeeding generations, we must reconstruct a curious sequence: a young poet in need of the benefits of literary patronage wrote a verse panegyric that is distinctly *ad hominem* and *ad tempus*, but somehow—through his offices, Piso's or somebody else's—the poem moved beyond its intended original orbit to reach a wider audience. As such, the poem would both exemplify and refute Sabine MacCormack's formulation of the 'in-built obsolesence' of panegyric.[13]

If in the very deliberate artistry of Statius, the influence of the *Laus Pisonis* is so allusively constructed that a respectable argument can be maintained that it is not really there, we move to surer ground when Piso's name crops up, in the poetry of Martial and Juvenal.[14] Martial's epigrams can be difficult to date, at least within books.[15] Book 12 seems to date to the period when Martial was back in Spain, perhaps from AD 98 and following, but not published for three or four years. In epigram 36 of the twelfth book, Martial bemoans the degraded state of contemporary patronage.

> Pisones Senecasque Memmiosque
> et Crispos mihi redde, sed priores
>
> Give me Pisos and Senecas and Memmii and Crispi, but the ones of old[16]
> (*Epigrammata* 12.36.8–9)[17]

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[11] Gibson (2006) 230–231, 310. Lexical resonances between the *Laus Pisonis* and Lucan, such as *arma … rotare lacertis* (*LP*178) and *arma … lacertis … rotant* (*Bellum Civile* 3.671–673) are harder still to evaluate, because of the controversies surrounding the relative dates of the two poems.

[12] Gibson (2006) 178 cites the revival of the identification of the author as a very young Statius by Laguna (1998) 18, 20; conversely, for Statius' supposedly greater poise and charm as a panegyrical poet, Alex Hardie argued that the *laus Pisonis* 'cannot be regarded as a model for Statius' (1983) 91. The revival of the attribution of the poem to Lucan by Seel (1969) has not been widely persuasive.

[13] MacCormack (1975) 159.

[14] I am indebted here to Champlin (1989) 104–105, who uses the texts to support his identification of the Piso of the poem as the conspirator and to demonstrate Juvenal's acquaintance with the poem.

[15] Howell (1980) 5–6.

[16] N.B. Shackleton-Bailey's Loeb reading *seu priores* ('or earlier men').

[17] Piso is also named in 4.40.1–2, dated c. late 80s AD, *atria Pisonum stabant cum stemmate toto/ et docti Senecae ter numeranda domus* 'The halls of the Pisos used to stand with their

The epigram has been adduced as evidence that Martial had enjoyed the patronage of Piso and Seneca[18]—it was certainly possible, chronologically, as it seems likely that Martial moved to Rome in c. AD 64—and if that is right, then of course, Martial would not have needed any authority other than his own experience to make his claim about Piso's generosity as a host.

Juvenal, on the other hand, could not have been patronised by Calpurnius Piso. Little is known of Juvenal's biography, but even the earliest date postulated for his birth is too late.[19] That said, he knew Martial and probably read his epigrams.[20] Juvenal is famously critical of the customs and abuses of patronage, across several poems. In his fifth *Satire* the speaker imagines addressing some corrective remarks to Virro, an insufferably snobbish host:

> nemo petit, modicis quae mittebantur amicis
> a Seneca, quae Piso bonus, quae Cotta solebat
> largiri; namque et titulis et fascibus olim
> maior habebatur donandi gloria. solum
> poscimus ut cenes ciuiliter.

> Nobody is asking for the things Seneca used to send to his middle-ranking friends or the things good Piso and Cotta used to give; for once the glory of giving was greater than titles or the consulship. We only ask that you dine as a citizen. (*Satires* 5.108–112)

An ancient scholiast on Juvenal, whose reliability Michael Reeve defended by demonstrating its use of prose clausulae, identifies Juvenal's *Piso bonus* (l. 109) as Calpurnius Piso—that is, according to scholarly orthodoxy, the panegyric's *laudandus*.[21] In Juvenal as in Martial, it seems the very Piso of the *Laus Pisonis* is linked with Seneca as a byword for excellent patronage.

Ted Champlin, building on Ted Courtney's conviction that Juvenal was familiar with the *Laus Pisonis*, points out some key themes which the satirical and panegyrical lines have in common—the uselessness of titles without character to match, and the typically poor treatment Roman clients receive: *titulis* (Juvenal 110) recalls the opening lines of the *Laus Pisonis* where it

whole ancestry, and the house of learned Seneca, to be reckoned three times'. The three Senecas are the Elder, the Younger, and Lucan.

18 Howell (1980) 2.

19 Coffey (1976) 119–120.

20 Juvenal's biography is irrecoverable, but he is likely to have been born in the late Julio-Claudianic period. According to Highet (1954) 17–19, Juvenal and Martial seem to have been one-time acquaintances; Townend (1973), Coffey (1976) 139. Nb in the passage below how Juvenal links Seneca and Piso as Martial had.

21 Reeve (1984); the scholion, reproduced by Reeve, also mentions Piso's skill in the game of *latrunculi*, for which see the *Laus Pisonis* 190–208.

occurs three times (2, 13, 33); 'Juvenal's five lines are a virtual précis of the poem'.[22] That is, despite the similarities in attitude the Martial and Juvenal verses share, it seems likely that Juvenal was directly acquainted with the *Laus Pisonis*—and the possibility remains open that Martial was too (if as a young poet he had enjoyed Piso's patronage, he would probably have heard of this poem by a fellow poet, aspiring to enjoy a similar patronage.)

The scholiast's interpretation, and the original references by Martial and Juvenal are all premised on Calpurnius Piso's reputation as a generous patron. The generosity of a Julio-Claudian long since dead would not perhaps be the obvious thing for moderns to expect the later Flavian period or beyond to be commemorating, but somehow in Martial, Juvenal and his scholiast, the characterisation of the Piso of the *Laus Pisonis* has lodged firmly in popular memory—more firmly than his role in the conspiracy. That is, to Martial and Juvenal in the late Flavian period and the early second century, Piso's name was not synonymous with the failed conspiracy against Nero, (be it a brave and noble gesture against a tyrant or perhaps a weak-willed collapse when the conspiracy began to falter), but with generous hospitality. To what might we attribute this reputation if not the *Laus Pisonis*? What other mechanism could we postulate? A vernacular tradition perhaps, a word-of-mouth reputation passed on over the couple of generations since Piso's death, but one which gave greater prominence to his generosity than his sensational death? This is possible, but it is unlikely to have been a tradition completely independent of the *Laus Pisonis*, at least in the case of Juvenal who is thought to have known the poem. The *Laus Pisonis*, an occasional poem, written *ad rem, ad tempus* and *ad hominem* some sixty to seventy five years or more before seems to have become part of something bigger—its fifty five verses devoted to Piso's conduct as a patron (81–136) seem to have created an enduring and positive image of him, elevating him into a shorthand reference for that particular social virtue and claiming a position of prestige and authority for itself in a vibrant literary system.

It was in this context of socially engaged Latin poetry which referenced Calpurnius Piso as a generous patron—in the case of Juvenal, probably in response to the *Laus Pisonis*, and in the case of Martial, possibly so—that from AD 109 Tacitus began his *Annals*, with his account of the Pisonian conspiracy of AD 65 featuring in book 15. Piso's excellence as a patron is also amplified in this well-known passage.

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[22] Champlin (1989) 105; Courtney (1980) 244 'a poem evidently known to Juvenal' and 381, with some line references for parallels.

> ineunt deinde consulatum Silius Nerva et Atticus Vestinus, coepta simul et aucta coniuratione, in quam certatim nomina dederant senatores eques miles, feminae etiam, cum odio Neronis, tum favore in C. Pisonem. is Calpurnio genere ortus ac multas insignesque familias paterna nobilitate complexus, claro apud vulgum rumore erat per virtutem aut species virtutibus similes. namque facundiam tuendis civibus exercebat, largitionem adversum amicos, et ignotis quoque comi sermone et congressu; aderant etiam fortuita, corpus procerum, decora facies; sed procul gravitas morum aut voluptatum parsimonia: levitati ac magnificentiae et aliquando luxu indulgebat. idque pluribus probabatur, qui in tanta vitiorum dulcedine summum imperium non restrictum nec perseverum volunt.
>
> Next, Silius Nerva and Atticus Vestinus took up the consulship, and a conspiracy began and gained strength, to which senators, knights, soldiers, even women, had given their names, out of hatred for Nero and enthusiasm for Calpurnius Piso. Sprung from the Calpurnian family and conversant with many famous families through his father's nobility, he had a great reputation amongst the people for his virtue, or for the appearance of virtues. For he used his oratory to protect the citizens, he was generous to his friends, and even to strangers he was kind with his words and his company; as a matter of luck, he was tall and handsome; but he was far from serious in his morals or self-denying in pleasures. He was superficial, showy and sometimes self-indulgent. And that won the approval of many, who want the highest authority to be a charming mass of faults and not restrained or strict.
>
> (*Annals* 15.48)

Piso's Calpurnian origin according to Tacitus (*is Calpurnio genere ortus*), has its parallel in *Laus Pisonis* 15, *domus Calpurnia*; his *nobilitate* is mentioned three times in the poem's opening (3, 7 *bis*); his virtues *per virtutem* also three times (5, 27, 97), his eloquence (*facundia*) four (32, 36, 109, 139); his generosity to his friends *largitionem adversum amicos* also features in the poem (117–118, 131), his good looks too *decora facies* (100–101). In addition, Piso's *levitas* could be exemplified in his interest in playing ball or *ludus latrunculorum* (185, 190 ff.). Champlin concludes that 'Every virtue found in Tacitus can be found in the *Laus Pisonis*, while the historian adds nothing that is not to be found in the poem'.[23] This is quite an aggregation of correspondences, both verbal and thematic, making a persuasive case that Tacitus—like his contemporary Juvenal—knew the *Laus Pisonis* and drew on it in large measure for his characterisation of Piso. But these are not poetic intertexts in a prose work to embellish or elevate, such as is the case (along with other effects) when allusions to Vergil feature. This intertextuality is functioning differently.

[23] Champlin (1989) 104.

Tacitus' account of the conspiracy of Piso features prominently in modern discussions of his general use of sources—for example, at chapter 49 he confesses *nec tamen facile memoraverim*, 'I could not easily say'; at 53 he records but rejects as absurd a detail he got from Pliny the Elder; a further detail is attributed to Fabius Rusticus at 61. Throughout his narrative of the conspiracy, Tacitus occasionally reveals his source, or contradicts it, or at least makes it clear that he has a source (via indirect speech: *plerique crediderunt* 'the majority believe' 52, *ut alii tradidere* 'as others maintain' 53).[24] Ronald Martin surmises other sources for Tacitus' account now lost to us—Titinius Capito and Arulenus Rusticus.[25] But the *Laus Pisonis* is not mentioned by Tacitus or his modern critics.

That the *Laus Pisonis* is an unacknowledged source for Tacitus' account is not of itself remarkable—ancient writers' footnote-free practice varied enormously, and anyway to advertise that a panegyrical poem written a generation before the episode being narrated had influenced its form would be to invite derision in a work of historiography. So the silence is understandable. But on the other hand, if Tacitus could not very well admit a debt to the poem, nor could he ignore the excellent reputation we have seen Piso enjoyed in Tacitus' contemporaries Martial and Juvenal—and their general readers' perception of Piso to which their references seem undemonstratively to appeal. Accordingly, Tacitus' account of Piso's actions and character reads like a deliberate corrective of the flattering picture the poem creates—the characterisation accepts/ reiterates some of its terms (such as his nobility, good looks, *amicitiae* and *facundia*), but denounces Piso for a lack of moral *gravitas* (identifiable in interstices and details of the poem, such as his skill in the board-game *ludus latrunculi*, 190–208, but of course never articulated as such). Tacitus' historiography provides an alternative argument; just as it recalls it, Tacitus' picture of Piso can be seen suggestively, judiciously and authoritatively to overwrite and undermine the panegyrical poem.

Historiography's challenge to epideictic is staged elsewhere in the *Annals*. At the book's opening Tacitus reprises the criticism he made of the unreliability of imperial historiography after Augustus at the beginning of his *Histories*.[26]

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24 Mendell (1957) 209–210.

25 Martin (1981) 210.

26 *Ann.* 1.1, *Hist.*1.2.

> sed veteris populi Romani prospera vel adversa claris scriptoribus memorata sunt; temporibusque Augusti dicendis non defuere decora ingenia, donec gliscente adulatione deterrerentur. Tiberii Gaique et Claudii ac Neronis res florentibus ipsis ob metum falsae.
>
> Rome's early successes and failures have been recorded by famous writers, and distinguished intellects were not lacking to record Augustus' reign, but then they were deterred by the increase in adulation. In their own lifetimes, the reigns of Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius and Nero were falsified, for fear of the consequences.

Tacitus' claim that under the Julio-Claudians after Augustus, a tendency to adulation had emerged—to the detriment of the genre—might find exemplification in Velleius Paterculus' *Compendium* of AD 30, with its flattering portrait of Tiberius. Notwithstanding the identification of echoes of Velleius in Tacitus, the portrait of Tiberius in the *Annals* is far from flattering; Tacitus' easy programmatic claim to be writing *sine ira et studio* ('without anger and partisanship') is put to the test in projects such as this—to rewrite in equanimity the record of the past, and as part of that, to correct the unreliable but perhaps enduring panegyrical portraits of central Julio-Claudians, such as Tiberius and Piso.[27]

But the cases of Tacitus' rewriting (or overwriting) of the characters of Tiberius and Piso are not precisely congruous; in the introduction to the *Annals*, Tacitus makes it clear that he is setting out to challenge the distorted account that the debased historiographical record offered, but although his characterisation of Piso appears to be a corrective to that of the *Laus Pisonis*, he makes no claim to be confronting a position established by a poem. Secondly, in composing a less flattering picture of Tiberius than contemporary historians had painted, Tacitus was perhaps both contributing to and benefiting from his own generation's taste for critical historical assessment, as evidenced by the spiky biographies of Suetonius; but in overwriting the anonymous poet's panegyrical assessment of Piso, which in the pages of Martial and Juvenal appears to have enjoyed second wind, it seems Tacitus was daring a more controversial line.

Tacitus confronts the poet's evaluation of Piso, but presumably because he was aware of the poem's ongoing decent reputation, he suppressed his working and while rehearsing the essentials of the *Laus Pisonis*, tried to turn its claims against itself—in his leisure pursuits, Tacitus' Piso showed not the versatility and open-mindedness of the poem, but a shallow lack of

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27 On Tacitus and Velleius, eg Martin and Woodman (1989) 118.

seriousness, and his popular appeal now seems sinister with his *species virtutibus similes*. Tacitus' Piso has more the mercurial, contradictory and edgy quality of Sallust's Catiline than the monochrome sheen of the *Laus Pisonis*.[28] What Tacitus' reactionary rewriting points to is his sharp awareness that, suspect as his public might be in principle of the reliability of panegyrical discourse, nonetheless if a panegyrical 'line' was still current, if it still held popular imagination, (as Piso's did, it seems) it could best be challenged with circumspection. 'A new discourse for a new regime' had been Pliny's plea in his panegyric of 100 (*discernatur orationibus nostris diversitas temporum, et ex ipso genere gratiarum agendarum intellegatur, cui quando sint actae*, 'let the change in time be evident in our speeches, and let it be understood from our manner of thanksgiving to whom and when thanks are being given' *Panegyricus* 2.3), effectively condemning panegyrics of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian eras; Pliny's claim reveals a heightened awareness of the problematics of praise, to be followed a few years later by Tacitus' cautious approach.

At the same time, in locking horns with the good reputation Piso seems to have continued to enjoy in contemporary poetry, Tacitus accepts its general terms of engagement—that the qualifications for office are essentially moral or charismatic, rather than say, based on financial or military backing, or relevant experience. For Tacitus to say or imply that Piso failed because in the end he lacked the necessary moral fibre is to correct epideictic on a point of order not to assault its fundamental premise. When writing several decades after the conspiracy, Tacitus drew on the (good) reputation Piso still had from the poem, and the (bad) fact the conspiracy failed, as splendidly polar qualities for a dramatic narrative, the balance that is achieved between them a way of parading Tacitus' claims for historiographical discretion. But the chapters do not inform us much about what actually happened, or further Tacitus' reputation as a keen political analyst.

Whatever its date of composition, the occasional poem by a man who at the time at least lacked financial security and, presumably, literary acclaim, showed remarkable durability. It is safe to assume the poet kept a copy of it, and perhaps (depending on its date relative to the attempted coup) Piso too. After Nero's death, the poem may well have enjoyed a burst of wider popularity as part of a process of canonisation of Nero's victims—at any rate, it seems clear that the poem then proved an influential text over three generations, its topoi reworked by later panegyricists, its presentation

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28 E.g. the famous character description at *Bell.Cat.* 5.

of Piso accepted as an orthodoxy available for rehearsal by Martial and Juvenal, and for coded, suggestive overwriting by Tacitus. It might not have persuaded Piso to extend his patronage to the poet, but in its own, more lasting way, it set an agenda, and proved to be an interesting test-case in the reaction to panegyrical discourse in the post-Neronian and post-Domitianic world. What its mixed reception suggests is that panegyric as a relatively recently enfranchised discourse in Roman society had problems settling in. Presumably it was welcomed by some, especially those who had much to gain from its successful deployment in hierarchical relationships: patrons, looking to further their own socio-political ambitions with the articulate and devoted voices of some literary cronies; and clients such as our poet, Statius and Pliny, men needing to secure or maintain the goodwill of powerful friends. In Tacitus' *studium*-free historiography, a more nuanced and judicious type of literature, we get a glimpse of the difficulty of dislodging a popular perception once panegyrical discourse had propagated it.[29]

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‘ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN’: CLAUDIUS AND THE POLITICS OF AD 41

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The violent overthrow of a regime causes disjuncture and this can have unexpected outcomes. The combined conspiracies to kill Gaius (Caligula) in AD 41 descended into chaos because of the ferocious reaction of the *Germani* (the imperial bodyguard) and the discretion of the Praetorians. Claudius emerged from the metaphorical dust and ashes as *princeps* and this essay will look at how he cemented his position through his exploitation of issuing coinage, one of the permanent ways to disseminate propaganda. In this case it was the distribution of a political manifesto. The essay will concentrate on one iconographic image in particular, the *aureus* and *denarius* PRAETOR RECEPT, *Praetoriani Recepti*, usually translated as the ‘Praetorians Received’ and shows the debt Claudius owed to the Guard; they greet each other in an act of mutual trust,[1] it is one of the seven different issues struck in the early months of Claudius’ rule during AD 41, and the companion to the IMPER RECEPT issue, *Imperator Receptus*, which can be translated as ‘Imperator Received’, (loyalty/assistance from the Guard who took Claudius to the Praetorian camp after the murder).[2] I will argue that the iconography was confident and its subtlety had far-reaching consequences for Rome. Initially there will be a brief outline of Gaius’ murder followed by a consideration of the act of succession in the early first century and the subsequent political manoeuvrings of the new emperor, Claudius.

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[1] *RIC* 1.38; *BMCRE* I 8–10 are from AD 41/2. Von Kaenel (1986) 7–33, identified it as Münztyp 1. The issues of AD 43/4 (*RIC* 1.39; Münztyp 17) and AD 44/5 (*RIC* 1.40; Münztyp 20) had slightly amended iconography where the figure of Claudius was larger than the Signifer of the Praetorian guard, but both figures are significantly still on the same ground line. See Levick (1990) 33–51 (especially 39); Osgood (2011) 29–32.

[2] *RIC* 1.22; *BMCRE* I 5 is from AD 41/2. Von Kaenel (1986) 7–33 identified it as Münztyp 2. There were issues in AD 43/4 (*RIC* 1.23; Münztyp 18), AD 44/5 (*RIC* 1.24; Münztyp 21), and AD 46/7 (*RIC* 1.25; Münztyp 23); Cf Levick (1990) 39, 88; Osgood (2011) 29–32.

The Conspirators Strike

Gaius, Milonia Caesonia and their daughter were murdered on the Palatine by a conspiracy led by Cassius Chaerea, a Praetorian tribune.[3] The immediate imperial family had been extinguished and if Caesonia was to be a rallying point for opposition, this event had removed one arm of potential resistance. The German bodyguard killed Asprenas, Norbanus Balbus and Anteius and then raced through the Palatine arriving at the theatre where the audience became terrified for their lives. The *Germani* fixed the heads of executed senators upon the altar,[4] and rumour and counter rumour were only quashed by the announcement that Gaius was dead—this also had the effect of subduing the bodyguard. They now had no reason for continuing their revenge as their commander and paymaster was dead.[5] There are differing accounts about how Claudius was found in the palace, the most notorious that he was cowering behind a curtain, but after some debate among the Praetorians, he was removed to the *castra*. Waiting in the camp may have been rather unsettling but it was probably the safest place, especially as Chaerea issued orders to kill Claudius.[6] In addition, the Senate were supported by the urban cohorts and while Claudius had the support of the Praetorians, and significantly the brutal *Germani*, it did not stop a trial of strength from gathering pace.

Josephus states that Claudius would not bow to a Senate that had sent envoys demanding he would not use violence to hold power. Claudius should give way to the wishes of the Senate which claimed it represented the majority view (in an assumption that senatorial view took precedence) and that the rule of law should be the demands of governing the empire.[7]

The Senate had taken control of the Forum and the Capitol[8] and were determined to restore public liberty *communem libertatem*,[9] which can be interpreted as a move to restore the republic. The speech of Gnaeus Sentius

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[3] See, Suet. *Cal.* 56–60; *Claud.* 10; Jos. *AJ.* 19; Jos. *BJ.* II.184–214; Dio Cass. 59.29–30,60.1; the relevant chapters in Tacitus are missing.

[4] Jos. *AJ.* 19.143.

[5] Jos. *AJ.* 19.139–157.

[6] Jos. *AJ.* 19.258.

[7] Jos. *AJ.* 19.229–230.

[8] The importance of the Senate taking the Capitol was it could be defended and the forum controlled access and egress; Dio Cass. 60.1, 30.3; Suet. *Cal.* 60; Jos. *AJ.* 19.158; see Wiseman p. 71 for the first meeting of the Senate.

[9] Suet. *Claud.* 10.3.

Saturninus to the Senate,[10] was a measured argument highlighting the desecration of the republic from Caesar onwards and the sacking of the laws of state and in his eyes the worst offender by some distance was Gaius who had just been killed by tyrannicides. The Senate had been debilitated by treason trials and persecutions under Tiberius and Gaius but had not spoken out and this was an opportunity to redress the situation. Saturninus held that no autocratic ruler could now frighten them back into silence and that at present the senators were only accountable to the Senate which was the most effective way to maintain the safety and security of Rome.[11] It was now important for senators to show individual action of thought and to speak out against any previous legislation without fear of retribution, because what had led Rome to its knees were good men standing by in silence. They had silently watched their city being degraded by the questionable conduct of the previous emperors.[12]

Dio Cassius states that there were divergent views in the Senate during the debate between those wanting to retain the status quo and those wanting to restore the republic—unsurprisingly there were differing views on suitable candidates for *princeps* but Dio does not tell his readers if he knew which were being discussed.[13] After discussions into the night, Chaerea asked for the watchword and the Senate took control as the consuls gave the word 'Liberty'. This was passed to soldiers who were sympathisers with the republican cause—although how this was decided, considering the uproar on the Palatine amongst the soldiery, is difficult to imagine. The Senate declared war on Claudius as they wanted to either restore the republic or choose a worthy leader (here Josephus uses ἡγεμονεύσαντος),[14] and even though Claudius was being held 'against his will' he did not betray Praetorian support. The pragmatic Claudius would not rule by force but by moderation and consultation with the people (as if Gaius' fate was not warning enough).[15] However the Senate would not submit and Claudius would not desert the soldiers who had sworn loyalty to him so the lines were set for a civil war. Josephus claims it was Agrippa who told Claudius of the deteriorat-

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10 Jos. *AJ*. 19.167–184.
11 Jos. *AJ*. 19.178.
12 Jos. *AJ*. 19.179.
13 Dio Cass. 60.1.
14 Jos. *BJ*. 2.204–205. Josephus talks up Agrippa's importance in the events that followed; he was made King of Judaea (2.214 ff.) as a reward for acting as the mediator between the Senate and Claudius.
15 Jos. *BJ*. 2.207–208.

ing situation and he had to act to save his (fledgling) principate.[16] Chaerea had ordered the three loyal Urban Cohorts to protect Rome and this generated goodwill in a populace 'overjoyed' at recovering their sovereignty.[17] By grabbing the principate, a contender would necessarily take sovereignty away from the Senate and the people, and in so doing probably fuel anti-imperial sentiment. Whether Claudius was implicated in the conspiracy to remove Gaius is not clear, but he did minimise the potential for bloodshed.[18] The Praetorians needed someone to protect in order to survive—a restored *res publica* would have no need of them, and their decision 'to choose' Claudius was probably calculated to redress the powerful vested interests at work in the Senate.[19] However, Gaius had based his principate on absolute rule and divine power and Claudius would have been ill-advised (and unlikely) to follow suit. He would 'offer' the Senate a moderate ruler. 'The government would be monarchy in name, but in practice it would be open for all to share in common …'.[20]

Claudius addressed the assembled troops and they took an oath of loyalty; he paid the Praetorians 5,000 *dinarii* each. Josephus says this was in return for their loyalty but one can take issue with this claim. If the soldiers had actually 'chosen' Claudius to lead them, then there was less need to buy them off. But what if this disbursement was for their support in a conspiracy, similar to a payout from the spoils of war? Or, was it a payment for services to be rendered? Levick's hypothesis is very attractive: Claudius set up the gift as a way of undermining the Urban Cohort, and the following day, not wanting to miss out, these soldiers were pressing the Senate for Claudius to be *princeps*.[21] Overnight, the consuls convened a meeting in the Temple of Jupiter but only a hundred senators turned up, and it seems the bulk had self-interest at heart more than fighting for a (lost) republican cause. Those senators who believed that their best chance of 'liberty' evaporated with the survival of Claudius were deserting the city while there was a migration

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16 Jos. *BJ*. 2.213.

17 Jos. *AJ*. 19.186–190; from 212ff. Josephus veers off into a different account and Wiseman (1991) p. 86ff. shows how Josephus' account in an about-face becomes more hostile to the Senate and recounts how the people are more pro-Claudius and the principate.

18 Levick (1990) 38–39 briefly discusses the possibilities of Claudius' involvement and reasonably concludes 'his precise role cannot be determined'.

19 Jos. *AJ*. 19.223–225 trans. Wiseman.

20 Jos. *AJ*. 19.246 trans. Wiseman.

21 Levick (1990) 32–33; also cf. Wiseman (1991) 96, Jos. *AJ*. 19.249–250. Osgood (2011) 29–46 proposes that Scribonianus' revolt failed because the donatives to the legions from Claudius worked, hence his indebtedness.

towards the camp of a variety of citizens who would now aggregate round Claudius.[22] After some horse-trading with the rump of the Senate, Claudius had complete control in the city and of the empire.

Hurley demonstrates how Suetonius elucidates the emperor's virtues of *clementia*, *pietas*, *moderatio* and *civilitas* in the days after his accession.[23] Claudius expunged the memory of the most recent events and had only a few conspirators executed as an exemplum for killing an emperor; he made public offerings, deified Livia, and honoured his father Drusus, and Antony. He also refused any titles not to do with the office, such as *imperator*, which distanced him from Caesar and Augustus who both used *imperator* as a *praenomen* (he would later use it as a title), and showed respect for the people and institutions of Rome.[24]

A Paradigm of First Century Accession?

The following section will consider certain elements of how Tiberius and then Gaius came to power. Although there was hardly a substantive model for succession by AD 41, the previous Julio-Claudius accessions contain essentials that would reappear in future principates and provide the immediate political backdrop in the first century. The general rule had been that a new *princeps* had to gain military support quickly to establish his reign but this has to work in conjunction with neutering any rival claim.

In AD 14 Tiberius was recalled from Illyricum to Nola by Livia because of Augustus deteriorating health. Livia's guards (probably *Germani*) had sealed off access to the house and so had strict control over the critical timing of the announcement of Augustus' death which would segue into the statement that Tiberius was in control.[25] Given his hostility to Tiberius it is marked that Tacitus implies there was no real resistance and Rome quickly became servile which may explain the stringent political order of the oath of loyalty to the new *princeps* (taken first by the consuls, followed by the Praetorian commander, the prefect of the corn supply, Senate, army and finally the people).[26] Tacitus shows that the new *princeps* was careful to follow precedent

22 Jos. *AJ*. 19.248, trans. Wiseman.

23 Suet. *Claud*. 11.1 *clementia*; 11.2–3 *pietas*, 12.1–3 *moderatio* and *civilitas*, in Hurley (2001) 101–111.

24 Unlike Julius Caesar who took every title possible, Suet. *Iul*.76.

25 Tac. *Ann*. 1.4.

26 Tac. *Ann*. 1.4.

and not only allowed the consuls pre-eminence, but used tribunician powers to constitute the meeting of the Senate.[27] There was a fine line between a leader and a usurper and Tiberius was careful to let the consuls make the first move on any decision which looked as though a pre-Augustan republic was still operating, *nam Tiberius cuncta consules incipiebat, tamquam vetere re publica et ambiguous imperandi*.[28] Tacitus shows Tiberius was cautious and waited because he wanted to be seen as the man chosen by the state (*respublica*), but also to flush out what the main players were thinking so he could store the information for later use (self-protection really). However it seems Tiberius also wanted to see if the popular Germanicus would make a move for the empire. Germanicus already had the loyalty of the legions on the Upper Rhine, access to provincial wealth and the broad support of the people so he could take a very short step to power.

The first meeting of the Senate was to decide on the funeral of Augustus but Tiberius already had most of the trappings of power that came to him courtesy of Augustus. Tiberius gave the watchword to the Praetorians as Imperator, had the bodyguards, escorts and accoutrements of court and exercised imperial authority so his seeming refusal of powers was duplicitous.[29] Tacitus sets out the arguments for or against Augustus' rule and the former is given the fewest lines while the latter is a lengthy exposition. Augustus had organised the state to avoid monarchy or dictatorship as both had excessively negative connotations in Rome. He had used the title of *princeps*, first citizen, *non regno tamen neque dictatura, sed principis nominee constitutam rem publicam*, and the policy of centralisation was seen as a positive step, at least by Tacitus.[30] These would be clear *exempla* for his successors. The negative arguments could also be a salutary lesson for Claudius to ponder on as, amongst many things, Augustus would later be accused (by Tacitus) of having a lust for power; of usurping legions and a consulship; implementing the proscriptions; and allowing the Varus disaster to

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[27] Tac. *Ann.* 1.7, 'he dispatched letters to the armies as if the principate was already in his grasp; and nowhere manifested itself the least hesitation, except when speaking in the Senate'; also Suet. *Claud.* 23.

[28] Tac. *Ann.* 1.7. For Tiberius' *dissimulatio* at the death of Germanicus see *Ann.* 3.3.1 and comments Woodman, A.J. & Martin, R.H. (1996) 89. Cf. Syme (1958) 423, 429.

[29] Tac. *Ann.* 1.7; *Sed, defuncto Augusto, signum praetoriis cohortibus ut imperator dederat; excubiae, arma, cetera aulae; miles in forum, miles in curiam comitabatur.*; Suet. *Claud.* 24. See Seager 2005 for an extensive discussion of Tiberius' dissimulation, his accession and principate.

[30] Tac. *Ann.* 1.9. 'Yet it was neither on kingly rule nor dictatorship but on the name of 'princeps' that the state had been based', translation Woodman.

stain Rome. Even a wayward personal life was not spared.[31] Tiberius was naturally wary and he apparently stepped back from office—Asinius Gallus challenged him in order to force Tiberius to say that the state was a single entity that needed governed by a single mind, but he refused.[32] Tiberius was afraid of the dangers that were all around—he felt he was 'holding a wolf by the ears',[33] with personal vendettas and revolution to change the government, not to mention army revolts, gathering pace.[34] The groundswell of opinion in the Senate eventually persuaded Tiberius to give way, at least to the point of assuming power, but the three Pannonian legions mutinied. The change of leader and the inevitable power vacuum stirred the prospect of rebellion and potential profits from a *civilo bello*, civil war.[35] Many of these factors would resurface when Claudius had been acclaimed *princeps* and will be discussed later in the essay.

Tacitus says the hopes of the nation were passed to the popular Germanicus who was the antithesis of Tiberius.[36] If Drusus had come to power instead of Tiberius, it was believed he would have restored liberty (i.e. the Republic), *quippe Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potitus foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum favor et spes eadem*.[37] These are powerful grounds for support that would reflect well on Claudius.

In a Potemkin-like parallel, the legions of *Germania inferior* were already in turmoil over extraordinarily long service (over 30 years in some cases), harsh conditions and maltreatment by officers but they showed personal support for Germanicus. So much so, they refused to let him stand down by offering to support him if he wanted the principate, but in a tense game of brinkmanship Germanicus bested them by threatening to take his own

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31 Tac. *Ann*. 1.10.

32 Tac. *Ann*. 1.12.

33 Suet. *Tib*. 25.1, … *ut saepe lupum se auribus tenere diceret*.

34 Agrippa Postumus' slave, Clemens, was plotting revenge, while a conspiracy led by the senator L. Scribonius Libo planned regime change, Suet. *Claud*. 25.

35 Tac. *Ann*. 1.16–30 for Tacitus' version of Drusus' quelling of the Pannonian revolt.

36 There was not only animosity from Tiberius but also from Livia towards Germanicus and to his wife Agrippina. Tacitus sets up the opposing sides that would become tangible at the funeral of Germanicus in AD 20. Drusus was Augustus' stepson and brother of Tiberius, the adopted son of Augustus.

37 Tac. *Ann*. 1.33. 'The memory of Drusus among the Roman people was considerable, and it was believed that if there had been in charge of affairs, he would have given them back their freedom. Hence the goodwill toward Germanicus, and the same hope' trans, Woodman.

life.[38] The throne was offered by the rebels and was refused by the adopted son of the new *princeps* who had already taken the oath to Tiberius. Without the support of the legions he would be living on borrowed time, yet this was a golden opportunity for an overthrow of the existing hierarchy. The loyalty of an heir could have been overturned by the opportunity offered by the legions but it demonstrates a fundamental weakness in any strategy that relies on the army to overthrow the established order. Without a suitable or willing alternative to an incumbent, a revolt would almost certainly fail. One of the tricks to establish power is to render your rivals impotent. Although hypothetical, Germanicus could have been acclaimed *princeps* and taken his army to Rome, but that would not have played out well as it would be an unwelcome reminder of the actions of Julius Caesar.

The reaction in Rome was maybe not wholesale panic but there was deep unease because Tiberius had not gone to Germany in person yet he had used his sons to act on his behalf. There were two powerful legionary armies that could have threatened the empire, and public opinion was unimpressed that Tiberius stayed bickering with the Senate.[39] Germanicus assembled troops to end the revolt but instead used loyal men within the surrounded legions to turn against their comrades and the dissidents were massacred in their tents—Tacitus invokes a picture of a brutal civil conflict where soldier fought soldier and brothers-in-arms became enemies.[40]

> Diversa omnium, quae umquam accidere, civilium armorum facies. non proelio, non adversis e castris, sed isdem e cubilibus, quos simul vescentis dies, simul quietos nox habuerat, discedunt in partis, ingerunt tela. clamor vulnera sanguis palam, causa in occulto; cetera fors regit. Tac. *Ann.* 1.49

> It was a different scene from that of all the civil wars which have ever taken place. It was neither in battle nor from opposing camps but from the same beds that men—whom the day had found eating together and the night resting together—split into factions and thrust in their weapons. Shouting, wounds, blood were in evidence; only the reason for them was concealed; the rest was directed by chance.[41]

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38 Tac. *Ann.* 1.35; but when Calusidius offered Germanicus his sword to kill himself it tipped the balance away from the mutineers. The mutiny was over discharges from service and back pay—later emperors would learn from these events.

39 Tac. *Ann.* 1.46.

40 Tac. *Ann.* 1.42. The threat to the imperial family was reduced by Germanicus sending Agrippina and the young Gaius away from potential harm; cf. *Ann.* I.44–48.

41 Tac. *Ann.* 1.49, trans Woodman. However, J. Jackson catches the dramatic mood: 'No civil war of any period has presented the features of this. Not in battle, not from opposing camps, but comrades from the same bed—men who had eaten together by day and rested

Tacitus underscores that Roman should not fight Roman, and to lay the ghosts of the mutinous soldiers to rest, the legions needed to suffer honourable wounds in battle against Rome's enemies. Germanicus raided Germany and laid waste to a fifty-mile radius, sparing nobody and the legions were thus able to balance their rebellious acts. Germanicus and Drusus had saved Tiberius' reign and Rome from civil war but there was little gratitude.[42]

When Gaius came to power through ill-defined and probably illegal means that hastened the end of the failing *princeps*. He discharged the will of Tiberius and asked the Senate to vote him (Tiberius) the same honours as Augustus.[43] The latter was stalled as the Senate were not disposed towards Tiberius but they still needed time to get the measure of the new *princeps* before they refused outright.[44] Gaius paid the Praetorians the 1,000 *sesterces* they were due in Tiberius' will, and then paid them the same on his own account, seemingly as an act of generosity. The Senate accompanied Gaius to inspect the Praetorians at drill and this demonstrated that the senators were aligning themselves with the *princeps*. Gaius already stated that he would share power with the Senate and (in effect) would follow their wishes although Dio is not clear if he would be bound by their decrees.[45] In stark contrast the version in Suetonius has Gaius escorting the body of Tiberius back to Rome where the sense of expectation is tangible as Gaius had the support of the people, the provincials and the army. A longing for better days after the deprivations and paranoia during the latter part of Tiberius' reign, caused a tumult to break into the Senate to add their voice to the unanimous conferral of absolute power by the Senate. Although the grandson of Tiberius, Gaius was popular because his father was the much-feted Germanicus (and with such popularity, Tacitus says, Tiberius hated him).[46] Other potential heirs were considered; Tiberius Gemellus (Drusus' son) and Claudius but the former was too young and the latter was considered *inminuta*.[47] Choosing outside the *domum* was thought to be too

together at dark—they took sides and hurled their missiles. The yells, the wounds, and the blood were plain enough; the cause invisible: chance ruled supreme.'

42 See n. 29.

43 Tac. *Ann.* 6.50.

44 Dio Cass. 59.3.7.

45 Dio Cass. 59.6.1.

46 For Germanicus' popularity see Tac. *Ann.* 1.33 ff. and Suet. *Cal.* 3.

47 Tac. *Ann.* 6.46. *Immuneo* can be translated as weaken or enfeeble with the orthodox connotations for Claudius of mental slowness but a more pertinent translation would be *impair* because this is more suggestive of his stutter.

risky as it could lay open the memory of Augustus and the name of the Caesars to derision and contempt. Tacitus is ambiguous on whether he is referring to Claudius or another potential heir. Even considering that Claudius was perfectly capable of holding an official post and he was not unpopular, in the end Tiberius left it to fate.

Claudius' Political Standing

Claudius was kept quietly in the background by Augustus, and when he died in AD 14 his will left Claudius as such a marginal figure he was barely visible among the imperial family.[48] When Tiberius resisted his nephew's pleas for office, Claudius slipped into a life of sloth and drunkenness among the lower classes, yet he was still visited by men of reputation and he had the respect of the people, *numquam aut officium hominum aut reverentia publice defuit*.[49] This implies he had some standing in the city, that he was widely known and, to some degree, respected. Suetonius shed some light on this by recalling that the equestrians chose Claudius twice to represent them in deputations. These were at two highly important junctures in the history of the principate—after the death of Augustus and the downfall of Sejanus. The *equites* wanted to ask the consuls if they could have the honour of carrying Augustus' body to Rome, and they congratulated the consuls on Sejanus' removal. Neither are low-profile moments and Claudius would be thrust centre stage, however briefly.[50]

Tiberius repealed the decree of the Senate allowing Claudius to give his opinion among the consulars,[51] using the feeble excuse of his nephew's *imbecillitas* for withdrawing the privilege. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the Senate would want to put Claudius forward when he was not even a senator at this point. Claudius was an equestrian until his elevation to the consulship with Gaius, so his influence amongst the Senate was more telling

48 Suet. *Claud.* 4.

49 Suet. *Claud.* 5, 'Yet all this time, despite his conduct, he never lacked attention from individuals or respect from the public', trans. Rolfe.

50 Suet. *Claud.* 6.

51 Suet. *Claud.* 6 and this decree also had a provision to pay for the repairs to Claudius' house (damaged by fire) from public funds. Tiberius decided to pay for this himself. *Imbecillitas* can mean weakness, feebleness or imbecility which are hardly the same—and using a word such as 'infirmity' is ambiguous—so it depends on if one interprets it as referring to Claudius' physical ailments, his stutter or the stupidity implied in the sources.

than it seems at first glance.[52] Claudius was made consul for two months when, as Suetonius points out, Gaius needed to gain popularity by every means possible, which suggests that his uncle was a popular choice in the city. This was borne out by the public acclamations that filled the air when Claudius presided over shows in place of Gaius,[53] and is in stark contrast to the private humiliations he suffered in the court.[54] The time spent with the Senate and the equestrians meant that in AD 41 the Senate were negotiating with a known quantity. They would be well aware that Claudius was neither a simpleton nor a renegade.

'A Manifesto for Our Time'

'A manifesto for our time' is a slogan one could imagine being employed at the launch of a new government. In AD 41 Claudius set out his manifesto for his reign. It would differentiate him from Gaius and the unpopular Tiberius while retaining the elements required for the continuity of the principate. Sutherland explains the importance of the coin issues in the first year.[55] The Claudian policy announcements were contained in the seven issues struck during that first year and, unlike Gaius' issues, they did not claim political legitimacy through links with the *domus Augusta*,[56] but through Claudius' immediate position in Rome and his subsequent policies. There are two that are of particular significance for this discussion PRAET RECEPT and IMPER RECEPT.[57] However the five parallel issues provide context. The *corona civica* surrounding EX S.C. OB CIVES SERVATOS echoed the type used by Gaius who wanted to emphasise his Augustan antecedents to the Senate. But in the delicate circumstances of AD 41 the *corona civica* could remind the Senate of their political weakness having to only ratify the installed *princeps*.[58] The next phase was to set out the virtues that would be the watch-words for his reign and the use of PACI AUGUSTAE announced Claudius was taking on the mantle of the Augustan policy of peace in the empire

[52] Dio Cass. 59.6.6; Suet. *Claud.* 7, 15.
[53] Suet. *Claud.* 7.
[54] Suet. *Claud.* 8–9.
[55] Sutherland, C.H.V. (1951) 123–147.
[56] Sutherland (1951) 126 discusses the production from between AD 41–6 the production of three coins commemorating his father Drusus, Antonia and *sacerdos divi augusti.*
[57] *BMCRE* I, Claudius nos. 8–10 and 5 respectively.
[58] Sutherland (1951) 126–127; see *BMCRE* I, Claudius nos. 3, 16–19.

through military victory.[59] The human element is emphasised by Sutherland's thesis—the parallel concept of Victory, VICTORIA AUGUST(i) which implied a more personal virtue than just inheriting Augustus' policy.[60] CONSTANTIAE AUGUSTI, the 'constancy' of the *princeps* was a virtue that resonated 'resolution, steadfastness and tenacity in civil administration … had not appeared before as an imperial attribute'.[61] There would be no replay of Gaius' absolutism, as Claudius' rule would be considered and resolute; he would be dedicated to the task in hand.[62] This was the most personal attribute of the imperial virtues connected to the new regime, but it was not restricted to *aurei* and *denarii*—the new types that were struck in the *aes* mint included CONSTANTIAE AUGUSTI but here the figure of Constantia is not seated on a curule chair but standing and was armed with a spear. So the suggestion is of a military resolve that would complement Claudius' civil administration.[63] Sutherland argues that:

> … the choice of coin types—by whomsoever undertaken and discharged in previous reigns—now became the responsibility of an individual not only in close touch with the *princeps* whom he served, but also skilled and versatile in the expression of the imperial policy through scholarly familiarity with conceptual symbolism and the State Calendar.[64]

There is no reason why the thematic choices were not dictated by the intellectual and scholarly Claudius, as someone immersed in Augustan and imperial politics since birth.

The Republican Iconography of PRAET RECEPT

If he were to survive, Claudius had to prevent political fragmentation, not only within the citizen classes but also he had to retain the integrity of the empire. The issue PRAET RECEPT *aureus* and *denarius* of AD 41 was part of the political manifesto Claudius issued in his first two years. The

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59 Sutherland (1951) 127–128 and n. 1 discusses the importance of the complex imagery on PACI AUGUSTAE with its unique combination of concepts 'Pax', 'Victoria', 'Felcitas', 'Salus' and 'Pudor' connected to the anniversary of the temple of Janus, the ceremony of the augurs of Salus, and association of 'Pax' with Augustus.

60 *BMCRE* I, Claudius p. 167 n* and Sutherland (1951) 128 n. 3.

61 Sutherland (1951) 129; *BMCRE* I, Claudius nos 1,4, 11–15.

62 Sutherland (1951) 130–131. Cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 298–323, Fishwick (2002) 464; Sutherland (1940) 65–80; examples in Tac. *Ann.* 3.60; Suet. *Aug.* 10, 42.

63 Sutherland (1951) 130–131.

64 Sutherland (1951) 128.

iconography of Claudius shaking the hand of a *signifer* of the Praetorians is both complex and amazingly simple. The *signifer* represents the Praetorians and, by extension, is a symbol of all the soldiers and his image is placed facing out from the coin. Claudius is turned three-quarters and facing the Praetorian as they clasp hands which signifies *amicitia*. The *princeps* is facing away from the viewer and in doing so, acts as a bridge or a barrier, between the viewer (us, citizen of Rome, soldier) and the Praetorian. It depends on the status of the viewer as to how the symbolism works for any individual. This represents a unique iconographic departure for an emperor but one in keeping with Claudius' aims and the models he would adapt for his reign.

However he was not operating in a semiotic vacuum because there are Republican precedents. The *denarii* from the Social War, dated c. 91–88 BC issued by the Italian and Latin allies produced an image showing two soldiers clasping hands in front of a ship's prow.[65] This does not necessarily provide a precedent on how the iconography of the PRAET RECEPT coin could have been arranged, but it does show how the two figures could be arranged to both face the viewer as they clasped hands, albeit at an angle. One soldier welcomes the other as he disembarks from the ship—the suggestion is that of the hope of help for the Latin allies from Mithridates against Rome—and the image implies a recognition of assistance and mutual respect.[66] A *denarius* from the mint in Spain 46–45 BC with an obverse of the head of Cn Pompeius Magnus has a reverse of the crowned figure of the Spanish city of Corduba (on the left) welcoming a Pompeian soldier (right) disembarking from a ship—they are shown shaking hands.[67] Pompey had an enormous number of *clientelae* in Spain who would be in his debt—one could maintain that the representation of Claudius would be identified with the acquiescent image of the Spanish cities that were grateful for military assistance. This earlier coin has the personification of the city greeting the soldier of Pompey and it is the head of Pompey that is on the obverse which is not the same as the later Praetorian coin. If the *aureus* of AD 41 shows the gratitude of the *princeps* then it is ideologically different

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65 *BMCRR* Social War 48 and Sutherland (1974) 66–67 no. 100.

66 Sutherland (1974) 74.

67 *RRC* no. 470.1*a* is a *denarius* from M. Minatius Sabinus. There are coins 470.1d with similar themes but on 470.b-c the figures of the city (or cities) and the soldier are not shaking hands. 470.1d does not have the symbols of a branch or spear but the city and soldier shake hands, and it has a variety of obverse legends of Pompey with the title of *imperator*. One could propose that the ship is a naval fortification and in effect has the same function as the Praetorian camp.

from the Pompeian coin because it has Claudius' head on the obverse, and before Praetorian acclamation on the Palatine he was not their commander. Otherwise Claudius would be 'thanking' himself (as commander) for rescuing himself. The identification of the civilian figure as a representation of the people, or genius of the city, does not sit easily with Claudius' stabilising his position as ruler.

In 44 BC, coins issued by Caesar's supporters before and after his death brought political virtue to the fore. The issue by L. Aemilius Buca had the head of Pax with two clasped hands on the reverse,[68] and the *denarii* issued by Buca with the wreathed head of Caesar has a reverse of a *fasces* (with no axe), an axe, *caduceus*, a globe, and a pair of clasped hands. Crawford believes the clasped hands are symbols of *pax* and *concordia*.[69]

The end of the independence of the Senate in 43 BC was heralded by the formation of the Second Triumvirate of Octavian, Antony and Lepidus. The Triumvirate was represented on *aureii* issued by moneyers in Rome—the obverse of coins issued from the mint in Rome by C. Veibius Varus in 42 BC has the head of the individual *triumvir* with the reverse being clasped hands.[70] An earlier issue in 48 BC of a *denarius* by D. Iunius Brutus Albinus has Pietas on the obverse and two hands clasped around a *caduceus*;[71] Crawford argues this type links Pietas with *felicitas* and *concordia* which were particularly important during the civil war.[72] In 39 BC after the reconciliation in Brundisium between Octavian and Antony, Octavian issued a *quinarius* with Concordia on the obverse and a reverse of two hands around a *caduceus* with a legend of M.ANTON C.CAESAR IMP.[73] The concept of *pax* and *concordia* are strong elements in the iconography of the Praeto-

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68 *RRC* no. 480/24.

69 Crawford (1974), *RRC* no. 480/6 rev CAESAR DICT PERPETVO; also see 480/17 for the same reverse. The globe is a symbol of dominion, the axe links Caesar's office of *ponitifex maximus* and the use of the *caduceus* with the *fasces* (without an axe) are symbols for *felicitas* and *libertas* respectively, see Crawford (1974) 494.

70 *RRC* nos. 494.10 M. Lepidus, 494.11 M. Antonius, 494.12 C. Caesar, and on each coin the clasped hands have C.VEIBIVS above and VAARVS below with border of dots.

71 *RRC* 450/2; no. 451 is a *denarius* issued in the same year by Albinus with Pan on the obverse and the same reverse as 450/2.

72 Crawford (1974) 466.

73 *RRC* nos 529/4a–b and Crawford (1974) 743 who states in this case the *caduceus* is a motif for *concordia*. The obverse of *RRC* 546/5–6 an *aureus* and *denarius* from Cyrenaica 31 BC has an outstretched right hand with the title of IMP CAESARI above it and SCARPVS IMP below; the reverse has Victory on a globe with fillet and a palm branch with the DIVI F and AVG PON. This has the components for constructing Augustus' titles—Crawford (1974) 744 states 'there could be no clearer indication of the arrival of autocracy'.

rian coins and they draw on these Republican roots.[74] Nevertheless, even though there may be an element of *felicitas* why would Claudius explicitly state that his position as emperor is entirely due to the Praetorians? That is a dangerous strategy and assumes he would only build support from one side of the equation. The AD 41–2 *aureus* of Pax-Nemesis holding a *caduceus* pointing down at a snake would recall *concordia* and *felicitas*,[75] while the gold *quinarius* of the same year of Victoria Augusti seated on a globe would emphasise dominion (it seems that both territory and power are relevant here) and echoes the connection between Caesar and Augustus of Victory to Fortuna.[76]

One needs to consider how the propaganda of the PRAET RECEPT coin works in practice. If the viewer (holding the coin) is a soldier then Claudius is in effect in the middle of the soldiers, he is their commander and at the same time he is one of them. However, if the viewer is a senator for example, then Claudius is standing between the Senate and the Praetorians—he is a bridge or a barrier between the two sides. He is also facing the same way as the Senate, and looks towards the Praetorians. Claudius acts as a conduit between the two parties. Considering the stand-off between the Praetorians and the Senate after the murder of Gaius, then this has real merit in how Rome would be administered. It is significant that he is on the same groundline as the soldier which means he is on the same metaphorical and physical level as the soldier. Figuratively Claudius as commander becomes the *primus inter pares* when a soldier looks at the coin with Claudius at the centre. Augustus wanted to be regarded as *princeps* a title that implied *auctoritas* but had no *imperium*.[77] If a senator was the viewer, as he looked at the coin he stood on the same groundline as the *princeps* and the Praetorians and becomes part of the manifesto presented by Claudius. Although unlikely, if the togate figure represented the Senate then it expounds a desire on the part of the *princeps*, as the sponsor of the issue,

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74 Grant (1946) 227 discusses the concept of *Concordia* being used at the end of the Republic and there are instances of it being used in relation to colonies such as at Carthage, Beneventum and Brundisium that were founded after 42–40 BC.

75 *RIC* I.9; *BMCRE* 6.

76 *RIC* I.17–18; see Crawford (1974) 494 and 744.

77 Brennan (2004) 71–72 explains that the *principes* were in the second division of the army *hastati*, *principes*, *triari* and were the spearmen who were termed the 'most important' men; the *princeps senatus* was the first to give his opinion amongst the Senate but the use adopted by Augustus stemmed from the title *princeps civilitatis*, the foremost or most eminent Republican citizen, Jones (1985) 85,93.

to foster a dialogue between the two sides on an equal footing. Is there a suggestion of republican sympathies?

The representation and the rendering of the *imperator* is distinctive—he was not in military clothes standing on a dais above his troops like Gaius or Nero or presented as a larger figure than his subjects. He was shown as connecting with both sides of the political equation and stood between these sides and civil war. Claudius had carefully placed himself at the centre of the empire, but he was not situated in an elevated position of an absolute ruler. By a precise choice of iconography he was able to present himself as multi-faced (or even Janus-like?). The political relationship between the emperor and spectator was defined by the viewer so their status and political allegiance described the meaning of the iconography for an individual. Claudius had created an image that allowed the key political relationship to be interpreted by the viewers in relation to themselves—Claudius managed to be 'all things to all men'[78] and would be able to reassure the Praetorians that their place in the empire was secure, the Senate about their continued importance and that he would stand between the two sides.

Augustus is portrayed as priest on the North frieze of the Ara Pacis and, as such, acts as the mediator between men and gods. In AD 41 Claudius is acting as a moderator between the Senate (plus the equestrians) and the army, and by his central position along the axis of the numismatic image, sitting between the parties, he is the conduit for dialogue. The negotiations between Claudius and the Senate were to result in him being recognised by the Senate and so the legal ruler of the empire—he does not turn his back on the Senate, literally or metaphorically. In the circumstance of a senatorial spectator, the representation of the Senate will stand in a semi-circle behind the emperor as he greets the *signifer*. The central figure (Claudius) represents a universal ruler and the Praetorian coin is also a metaphor for the policy of centralization, a policy plainly defined by Momigliano.[79] As a member of the Senate and a consular, Claudius could be identified as acting as a representative of that body; he is the *princeps civitatus* and as such he is portrayed in a dialogue with the Praetorians. However, Momigliano argues that the formation of a chancellery consisting of imperial freedmen gave Claudius the executive to run the empire independent of the equestrians

[78] Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all [men], that I might by all means save some', 1 Corinthians 9.22.

[79] Momigliano (1961) 39–73.

and the Senate.[80] Furthermore 'in his desire to oppose the Roman aristocracy Claudius undesignedly took a long step towards estranging the government from the life of the empire, with the ultimate result of making the channels of communication between the government and its subjects ever more difficult and indirect'.[81] The most senior posts were filled by the freedmen Narcissus, Pallas, Callistus and Polybius and Momigliano points out 'their (the freedmen) importance has led the ancients and modern alike to suppose that the government must have fallen entirely into their hands. The baselessness of this supposition is obvious; the fact that Claudius was organizer of this ministry is proof enough that his personality dominated it'.[82] It is not apparent in AD 41 if there were a plan ready to be put into action that would rapidly erode senatorial power through extension to those individuals who had gained citizenship but did not have the right to stand for office (*ius honorum*), to be now eligible for office.[83] Claudius' speech in Lyon AD 48 argued for an extension of the right to stand for magistracies and the decision to admit the Aedui from Gallia Comata was ratified by the Senate and in doing so began a metamorphosis.[84] The political degradation of the Senate materialised alongside the reduction of their influence on the military (no need to serve in active theatre to be promoted); and the transfer of the *frumentationes* from the Aerarium to the Fiscus would make largesse towards the city an imperial right and not a senatorial privilege. The transfer of offices to imperial freedmen removed personal prestige, yet the squeezing of the *equites* financial interests had an adverse effect on their career prospects under the imperial freedmen.[85] The difficulties and subsequent purges the senators and equestrians suffered under Claudius were not apparent in AD 41.

'The court flowered under Claudius and Nero. It may be seen as a series of concentric circles of diminishing power, with their centre at the Emperor's bed and his bedroom; next his board and his dining room; then his private offices and reception rooms'.[86] Levick's model of the court is useful, but the PRAET RECEPT iconography promoted the idea of more equality

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[80] Momigliano (1961) 41–42, (i.e. issuing edicts and legislation from Rome).
[81] Momigliano (1961) 42.
[82] Momigliano (1961) 43.
[83] Momigliano (1961) 45. The provisions of AD 48 outlined in the Lyon speech allowed the citizens who were members of the Aedui and other Gallic tribes to be eligible for admissions to the Senate. Claudius took the office of censor and this allowed the senatorial roll to be manipulated which resulted in imperial sympathisers to be adlected as senators.
[84] Tac. *Ann.* 11.23–25.
[85] Momigliano (1961) 45–53.
[86] Levick (1990) 53.

across the circles. Levick rightly maintains that in AD 41 and AD 42 Claudius had to work hard to placate the fears of a weakened Senate—in the first instance, by act and deed, he displayed the utmost *civilitas* towards the Senate.[87] The second string to Claudius' approach was shown by his production of the *aes* with LIBERTAS AUGUSTA; he could not credibly reproduce the republican version of *libertas* that was demanded by the Senate in the hours after Gaius' murder, so Claudius assimilated and produced a version that promised the flourishing of *libertas* in an imperial (rather than the republican) world.[88]

In the first months of his reign Claudius revoked the unjust acts of Gaius but did not allow the Senate to dishonour his nephew—although this demonstration of imperial family bonds did not prevent Gaius' image being removed from Rome overnight.[89] Claudius promoted *his own* family—games for his parents Drusus and Antonia, arranging for Livia to be deified—yet he would only accept the titles that were connected to his office, and he himself would not allow equestrian games to be given on his account.[90] Dio Cassius also presents a picture of an emperor as a man-of-the-people, who met consuls on the floor of the Senate, and lived like an ordinary citizen when he was in Naples, (albeit one who took to the Greek way of life).[91]

Meeting the senators on the floor of the Senate is the same as the representation on the coin, both parties are standing on the same groundline and they are, to all intents and purposes, seen as equals even if the political reality was different. The single figure of the emperor walking to meet a larger group milling around as it came down to meet him recalls the scene on the Palatine where Claudius faced the Praetorians and the envoys of the Senate (the tribunes Quintus Veranius and Brocchus) who had been sent to persuade him not to take the throne by force.[92] Ironically, considering the meeting with the tribunes, the Senate wanted Claudius to submit to them because they were the far larger political entity—they wanted the law to provide his honours and office, yet the envoy's address was also a plea to prevent a civil war in the city.[93] The demonstration of respect shown by

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87 Levick (1990) 93–103.

88 *RIC* 97, *BMC* 145, from cAD41–50 but also see n* p. 127; Levick (1990) 94. Mattingly (1923) clvii.

89 Dio Cass. 60.4.6 and 5.1.

90 Dio Cass. 60.5.1–4.

91 Dio Cass. 60.6.1–2.

92 Jos. *AJ*. 19.229–235; Dio Cass. 60.1.4.

93 I would concur with Scramuzza (1940) 58–59 and Feldman (1965) 324–325 note *a*, that there is an inconsistency in Josephus' account when he promotes Herod Agrippa as the

Claudius walking down to meet the senators on the floor of the Senate is later echoed by Nero being instructed by Seneca to go and meet Agrippina to prevent her sitting beside him on the dias.[94] The manipulation of space allows one to neutralise the power of the other—movement into the space results in defusing a potential threat. This is manufactured under the guise of deference and respect for the other person or party. The representation of Claudius meeting the Praetorian shows a similar outcome—here the Praetorians are, in effect, neutralised as a threat (if only temporarily) and this echoes reality as the Praetorians were ultimately reliant on the *princeps*. The result was the acclamation was a formality.

The Claudian Iconography

Although commissioned by Claudius, it is evident there was careful composition of the elements in the coin but who designed the Praetorian coin is not clear. In this case the iconography of the series of AD 41–2 is so important that it is highly likely that the figurative model, if not the iconographic details, was ordered by Claudius himself.[95] How should one interpret Julio-Claudian coins if the masses were illiterate and the senators were disdainful of the emperor?[96] The idea of a canon of imperial virtues (such as the Augustan use of *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas*) has been demonstrated to be unreliable as an imperial concept,[97] but personifications of divinities such as Victoria, Pax or Concordia were attached to an emperor on the obverse of the coin. Wallace-Hadrill argues these are treated as abstractions by scholars but they should not be secularised. The virtues on a coin's reverse are connected to the emperor, who stood between man and the gods and '… the personification was therefore in some sense in the power of, or an aspect of the emperor on the opposite side … the message of the coin was

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powerbroker who will act as a go-between and persuade the Senate to accept Claudius as emperor when they have already offered him the office of *princeps*.

94 Tac. *Ann.* 13.4, Seneca advised Nero to advance and meet his mother.

95 Howgego (1995) 70–73 discusses 'choice and intention' of how and why particular themes were chosen for political ends.

96 Wallace-Hadrill, A. (1981) 298–323, who argues against M.P. Charlesworth's thesis, 'For the mass of the population of the Empire the legal and constitutional position of their ruler was an irrelevance. What mattered was their belief that he was right for them and that they needed him. This belief centred in possession of certain 'virtues'. Spread belief in these, and the ruler's position was secure'.

97 See Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 300–307.

roughly this: if you want peace you will have to pray to the deity of Peace; but Peace is in the power of Augustus, so you must first pray to him'.[98]

There is also the notion that the sum of the duties of the ruler; the influence of wealthy individuals and the Senate to make the ruler conform; and the imperial publicity machine reduce the efficacy of these virtues.[99] However this post civil war principate showed subtle numismatic changes—the shift from the demonstration of how a candidate was going to use power,[100] to using personifications and virtues as standard rubric, established that autocratic rule and the stability of the empire was based upon military victory.[101]

Levick frames the debate around propaganda and imperial coinage and highlights that coins should be treated like any other monument.[102] Yet under Vespasian the moneyers were not recalling past political events with which to connect the emperor, but were looking at it from a purely professional angle and only recycling successful issues. The use of coins as tools of imperial 'publicity' were subject to a variety of reasons for choosing one type, and invariably the least offensive would be chosen. Levick argues for using the term *publicity* over *propaganda* because the latter is too inflexible and implies a systematic approach to production and in many cases the conveying of a doctrine, when the main function of coins was to publicise the achievements and policies of the *princeps*/principate.[103] Hekster investigates whether coins were made for certain audiences i.e. different issues for different messages—this came to the fore in times of crisis. In the civil war of AD 68/9 messages were targeted at specific groups yet there were other equally overt but less combative political power struggles—one earlier example is the PRAETOR RECEPT issue. The message is missing from

98 Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 315.

99 Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 318.

100 Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 318 argues that the main worries were 'protection of property, of personal security (life and death), and of social standing'.

101 Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 319, 'there is little concern with advertising the personal attributes of the particular ruler; attention is focussed on the benefits of autocracy itself: on the possession of power, begotten of military victory, and of the stability and prosperity that derived from it'.

102 Levick (1982) 104–116, see 105, citing Belloni's argument.

103 Levick (1982) 105–106; the use of the term propaganda has negative connotations in the twentieth century which are too emotive. Charlesworth (1937) 105–133 discusses Augustus' use of propaganda pamphlets to blacken Antony's name and present him as mean and cruel; 108–109 refers to Appian 3.4.

the lower value issues and then the Praetorian coins disappear after AD 46 from the high value coins to be replaced by DE BRITANN(IS) and SPQR P OB C S.[104] The Praetorian coins disappeared completely after AD 47/8 while these new issues continued, and the lesser value coins retained the same messages they had since AD 41—a useful thesis is that Claudius felt he did not need the Praetorians as much in later years but this proposition depends on why he put the image on the coins in the first place. If there was no need to advertise that the *princeps* relied on their support then it is likely that Claudius was sure of the loyalty of the Praetorians—equally the message would be understood by the tribunes, by the army and, by extension, then so would the Senate. The strata excluded would be the equestrians and the plebs, and even then that assumes that one social stratum would or could not speak to another.

The idea of different coins for different audiences does not specifically exclude one group but, for the target group, the messages would be unambiguous. These messages would permeate society, however obliquely, and their assimilation into all political strata in the empire would have the effect of bolstering the original concept and intention through the networks of *clientelae* and *amici*. If the stories, gossip and rumour about an emperor travelled on undercurrents across the city, then imperial publicity or disinformation could use similar routes. Charlesworth argues for the images on coins shaping public opinion and influencing individual's views which is helpful here but he goes on to argue for a wider influence with the coin as a focus for political and religious values.[105] It is notable that in the second century, coins broadcast a plea of *Fides exercituum* as the armies rebelled, or *Concordia exercituum* when the legions were attacking each other, at exactly the time when loyalty and harmony were in short supply.[106] Yet it is likely that the images on coins would, by a process of osmosis, lodge in the 'national' consciousness. Just because the Praetorian coin was produced for a specific audience within a defined timeframe, does not mean the Praetorians were the only group who knew the 'secret' of Claudius' (and future) imperial power. However the political message of centralised imperial administration with Claudius in power at the centre would gain currency. Information would be assimilated by the intended viewer and could

104 Hekster (2003) 20–33, n. 34 for references to army pay.
105 Charlesworth (1937) 110–111; also see p. 111 ff. examining the four virtues of a good ruler, *virtutis clementiaeque et iustitiae et pietatis caussa*, *RG* 34.2.
106 Charlesworth (1937) 124.

be transferred second and third-hand across the city and Claudius would become aware of a coin's outreach. The accounts in the sources, which have aspects that reflect the iconography at face value, would be consistent with a hostile press. Of course the literary accounts do not have to have any specific association with the coins, but they do concur on the most literal level in this instance.

Conspiracies: AD 42

Four conspiracies were uncovered in the early months of Claudius' putative reign, including the revolt of the legions in Dalmatia led by the legate Lucius Arruntius Camillus Scribonianus in AD 42.[107] This was described as the start of a civil war by Suetonius because Rome had lost faith in Claudius after the death of Silanus. Annius Vinicianus, one of the rivals for the throne in AD 41, reacted badly to Silanus being a casualty of palace intrigue—he sent for assistance from another pretender for the principate from AD 41, Scribonianus (who was already mobilising). Vinicianus acted as a rallying point for general disaffection with affairs but Dio says the revolt ended when the legions did not believe in the promise of a restored republic. They saw only a repeat of civil strife.[108] Tacitus outlines the importance of Scribonianus' family history. Marcus Furius Camillus, elected dictator four times, saved Rome by driving the Gauls from the city in 387 BC and was hailed by Livy as the second founder of the city in 386 BC.[109] As consul Lucius Furius Camillus (with C. Maenius) subjugated the cities of Latium in 426 BC, and yet another L. Furius Camillus beat back the Gauls from Rome in 349 BC.[110] There is an ironic parallel in the account of the AD 41 rebellion, because Claudius was born in Lugdunum, the capital of Gallia Comata and like the Gauls he was going to be driven from Rome.

107 Suet. *Claud.* 13.1–2; Dio Cass. 60.15,1–16 who call him Furius Camillus Scribonianus—he had been adopted by L. Aruntius and was consul in AD 32, and an imperial legate in Dalmatia under Gaius and Claudius.

108 Dio Cass. 60.15.1–3. See Levick (1990) 59–61.

109 Plut. *Cam.* 23; Livy 5.10 *passim*, and 39.1–49.7 for the battle with the Gauls in the city and *Dictator reciperata ex hostibus patria triumphans in urbem redit, interque iocos militares, quos inconditos iaciunt, Romulus ac parens patriae conditorque alter urbis haud vanis laudibus appellabatur* (V.49.7). He also saved the city again, this time in peace by stopping people leaving the wrecked city to go to Veii, so Rome could be rebuilt. After the success of his son Lucius, the family honour waned until Marcus Furius Camillus won a triumph in AD 17 under Tiberius against the Numidians, Tac. *Ann.* 2.52; he was the father of Livia Medullina who was engaged to be married to a youthful Claudius.

110 Livy 8.13.10 ff.; also Tac. *Ann.* 2.52 and Woodman (2004) 66 n. 87.

The conspiracy was broken and retribution was swift, with Scribonianus dying in exile under mysterious circumstances; other equestrian and senatorial conspirators were either prosecuted, tortured, compelled to leave Rome, made to resign, or forced to commit suicide.[111] The outcome is compared to the aftermath of the trail of Sejanus where traitors were tried in the Senate then dragged to the Gemonian stairs,[112] but Claudius' policy of conciliation begun in AD 41 was not derailed by this episode. Scribonianus had the political and military connections that would, in most circumstances, have appealed to the army. He had esteemed ancestors, particularly Marcus Furius Camillus and political strength through his adoptive father the consul of AD 9 Lucius Arruntius. Wealthy, eloquent and well connected, Arruntius was descended from Sulla and Pompeius and was reportedly mentioned by Augustus as a likely successor to the principate alongside other possibilities in Asinius Gallus and Marcus Lepidus.[113] Arruntius came to the fore as families with Sullan and Pompeian descendants rose to prominence late in Augustus' reign with Tiberius' help—it is interesting to note that republican sympathies emerged from within the imperial family, or at least from those with Claudian ancestors.[114]

The revolt in Dalmatia was subdued by the political or the pragmatic outlook of the legions. It is extraordinary that Claudius did not have to send the consuls to subdue the rebellion—there would be no repeat of Germanicus' travails with the legions in Germany. In the end, the legions remained loyal to Claudius and did not offer the principate to their commander, unlike the Danube legions who offered the 'throne' to Germanicus in AD 14. The prospect of a coup was not attractive; the idea of serving under a restored republic did not appeal; nor did serving under an alternative *princeps* such as Scribonianus. What would convince them of this and that remaining under Claudius was in their best interests? The concept of *fides* comes to the fore—Claudius rewarded the VII and XI Legions with the name *Claudia Pia Fidelis* (Claudius' own: Loyal and Steadfast).[115] This marries with the clasped

111 Dio Cass. 60.15.4–16.8. See Hurley (2000) 112–115.

112 See Levick (1990) 60 for Claudius' political policy surrounding (past) rivals for the principate, and Osgood (2011) 45 proposes that Scribonianus' revolt failed mainly because the donatives worked, and hence Claudius' 'indebtedness' to the legions.

113 Syme (1958) 380; Tac. *Ann.* 1.13.1–3; Syme (1958) 381 dismisses this as idle speculation because the succession was already fixed, but Tacitus says it anyway—the reason being that Gallus and Arruntius were portrayed as victims of Tiberius.

114 Syme (1958) 382 n. 3 discusses those consuls promoted by Tiberius who had Sullan and/or Pompeian descent but were inept or corrupt.

115 Dio Cass. 60.15.4; Levick (1990) 137.

hands on the Praetorian coins and the result was (eventually) *pax* and *concordia*, exactly the initiative Claudius had been trying to foster in the first weeks of AD 41 as he knitted the broken bones of the empire back together. The conspiracy of rivals that were involved in killing Gaius could have easily resurfaced but the legions snuffed out this possibility. The power of the image of the PRAETOR RECEPT coin is implicit in these events—there was no civil war, no military coup and no change of ruler. The *princeps* relied on the loyalty of the troops to remain in power, and they needed a strong *princeps* to look after them (for pay and discharge) but the result was the safety of the city of Rome. The coin showed the commitment of both parties and, by extension, the Senate, but reinforced the position of their commander (eventually *imperator*) at the centre of the empire. No matter where they were in the empire this would always be the case. Claudius did not go in person to subdue the revolt—the design was transmitted to the legions that the *princeps* was their *imperator* who commanded from the centre. The rule would be universal and regardless of who looked at the *princeps* shaking hands with a Praetorian on the coin. He would always be at the heart of the empire ruling as the first citizen (*primus inter pares*), *princeps senatus*, and *imperator*. This would change incrementally over time as a policy of centralisation increased the layers of bureaucracy around Claudius but the fundamentals remained. It seems reasonable that Claudius put down a marker to establish a change of direction from the anxiety and paranoia created by Gaius' rule *in extremis*.

In AD 68, after years of an increasingly unpopular reign, the legions under C. Iulius Vindex in Lugdunum would take the opportunity to revolt. In AD 42 the Dalmatian legions had the ingredients for a rebellion and to follow Scribonianus, but they did neither. Claudius' seven coin issues of AD 41/2 sent out coherent messages about the type of principate that was being initiated. The new establishment could not claim direct 'descent' so had to allude to Augustus obliquely. Yet the political messages were assimilated and understood by their target audiences and, for two coins in particular, by the troops not only in Rome, but also in the provinces. One cannot be sure, but the Praetorian coins of AD 41 probably saved Claudius and the Julio-Claudian principate.

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NERO INSITIUUS: CONSTRUCTING NERONIAN IDENTITY IN THE PSEUDO-SENECAN *OCTAVIA*

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It has become a commonplace that the defining feature of the Neronian Age, as written by post-Neronians, is an intense theatricality that centres upon the 'self-inventing Tyrant' Nero.[1] This performed self-definition, alongside the re-definition of the Principate itself, provoked not just the collapse of Nero's 'real' and 'stage' identities, but also the damaging disintegration of the boundaries between *princeps* and people, creating a Rome in which it was no longer to tell the difference between appearances and reality.[2] At some—disputed—time after Nero's death, an unknown author writing in the style of Seneca engaged in a strikingly direct way with this problematic of the study of the identity and representation. His *fabula praetexta Octavia*, set in AD 62 and centring upon Nero's decision to divorce his wife Claudia Octavia, has been written off as a lifeless pastiche of Senecan tragedy 'proper', or as a gauche *apologia* for Seneca's involvement in Neronian tyranny. Yet *Octavia* offers much more than this. In its central concern with the nature of Nero's power and Roman identity, the *ignotus* analyses the interactive process by which literary texts structure and authenticate imperial identity, providing us with a Nero who uses his understanding of the process to offer an alternate script for rule.

Critical study of *Octavia* has been dominated by questions of dating and authorship.[3] Yet in thematic terms too the play is obsessed with the construction and representation of identity: the *ignotus* creates a 'real' Seneca for the stage out of a mosaic of his written works, condemns Nero to a

[1] Cf. Henderson (1989) 191: Nero is a 'self-inventing Tyrant who plays with identity as transgression'; Elsner (1994) 113 identifies Nero as an Emperor whose 'every gesture represented a new act in imperial self-definition'.

[2] The papers in Elsner & Masters (1994) explore varieties of 'theatrical' Nero: see esp. Edwards. The classic study of the sociological implications of Nero's theatrical image is Bartsch (1994).

[3] For deft overview of the problems of dating and authorship see Boyle (2008).

theatricalized *persona* that will anticipate later pejorative representations of the emperor, and gives a voice to the eponymous heroine, whose own character is not just oppressed by Nero within the play but also elided by history out of it.[4] Within the text itself characters attempt to self-identify with important mythological *exempla*: Octavia through self-construction as an Electra, Iphigenia or Cassandra, Nero as a tyrannical Atreus. But *Octavia* does not simply attempt to re-imagine Neronian Rome as Greek tragedy. It also seeks to come to terms with the nature of Nero's Caesarian nature through sustained engagement with two particular foundational texts of Julian authority and identity, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. The *ignotus*' use of these texts provides a sophisticated commentary on the intricately linked relationship of text, authority, and identity at the end of the Julio-Claudian period.

Text and Identity: Becoming 'Nero'

The 'self-enacting' quality of Senecan writing is itself put on stage in the central debate between Seneca and Nero, which examines the nature of the ideal behaviour of a *princeps*, staged as a battle between different textualised identities to be assumed. The philosopher-tutor urges his charge to behave according to the precepts of his own philosophical works, especially *De Clementia*, reprising in stichomythic debate the arguments 'he' had already made there: the importance of rule seated not in fear but love; the necessity to act as *pater patriae*; the model of Augustus, and Augustus' self-ascribed virtues of duty, justice, mercy and virtue (*pietas* (440), *iustitia* (441), *clementia* (442) and *uirtus* (443)).[5] When this Seneca urges Nero to rule as *pater patriae* in accordance with a policy of clemency and justice, he does not just 'perform' the self-constructing didaxis of the philosophical text; he also projects a philosophical *imago uitae*, to be actualised on stage in the figure of Nero.[6] The philosophical scripting of Nero as Stoic 'good-king' in *De Clementia*, anticipating in a rather different sense Tacitus' characterisa-

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[4] Octavia's most remarkable characteristic in later literature is her silence: O'Gorman (2000) 141–143; on Octavia in material culture, Wood (1999) 249–314.

[5] Cf. Augustus' *Res Gestae* 34.2.

[6] On constructions of the self in Seneca, and Seneca as literary artist writing himself and the world around him, see now the collected papers in Bartsch & Wray (2009), esp. Gill (2009); Ker (2009); also Too (1994); Mann (2006). On *De Clementia* in *Octavia*, Poe (1989); Manuwald (2002); Smith (2003) 401.

tion of Seneca as 'ghost-writer' for Nero,[7] thus attains a level of corporeality that plays into the Senecan project to present soul as text, desirous to create a *princeps* for a new Golden Age, untainted by civil war and citizen bloodshed.

It quickly becomes clear that Nero is has chosen a rather different *imago uitae* from the Senecan corpus to emulate in the *Octavia*. Electing instead to actualise in his own person the stage tyrants of Seneca's Neronian tragedy, *Octavia*'s Nero chooses to rule according to the egotism and amorality displayed by so many of Seneca's famous tragic protagonists. His key model is Atreus of *Thyestes*, who scripts and carries out a campaign of intra-familial slaughter, attaining godlike status along the way and establishing the utility of brute force (*uis*), arrogance (*superbia*), lust (*libido*) and cruelty (*crudelitas*).[8] *Octavia*'s Nero thus identifies and exploits Senecan tragedy's famous propensity to create villains who strive for and achieve 'autarchic selfhood'.[9] Transformative citation formulates this Nero as self-consciously 'real-life' Atrean tyrant, changing language to change the world: countering the *clementia* the Octavian Seneca urges, Nero scoffs that it would be madness, *dementia*, not to use the force he is capable of (*Oct.* 442; 496): rather than look after his people (*seruare*, *Oct.* 444; 495) Nero takes control of a script that now has the people serve him (*seruire*, *Oct.* 492).[10]

The effect is terrifying. This rogue Nero wilfully replaces the 'greatest pleasure of all' (*uoluptas maxima*)—the rewards of a life lived according to the precepts of Senecan philosophy[11]—with the *uoluptas* his new wife Poppaea can provide (*Oct.* 567), consigning Seneca to the impotent role other *satelles*-characters play in the Senecan tragic corpus and plotting his own course through life. When *Octavia*'s Nero embraces the *metus*-based system of rule emblematised in the motto of the Senecan tyrant: 'let them hate me, so long as they fear me' (*oderint, dum metuant*, *De Ira* 1.20.4), and turns it against his tutor—*Decet timeri Caesarem … Metuant necesse est* ('Caesar should be feared … They have to fear me' *Oct.* 457–458)—he

7 On Tacitus' 'scripted' Nero: O'Gorman (2000) 147–151; on Tacitus' and the *ignotus*' Seneca see Taylor (2010).

8 See esp. Manuwald (2003).

9 Cf. Boyle (1997) 175: 'autarchic selfhood manifests itself ubiquitously and conspicuously in the ability of characters to construct their identity and their domination of the world in language'. Calder (1983) provocatively reads *Thyestes* as already a training-manual for tyranny. For Seneca as *tyrannodidaskalos* see Dio Cass. 61.10.2; Rudich (1997) 17–106.

10 The text and all translations of *Octavia* are from Boyle (2008).

11 Cf. *De Clem.* 1.1.1 with Braund (2009) ad loc.

stages his refusal to 'be written' through Seneca's philosophical works, and literally stages his own identity anew. This worse-than-Atreus will enact his tyrannical nature against his own citizens and his sister-wife; as the chorus reflects at the end of the play, Greek mythology no longer can provide adequate exemplification for the suffering of all Romans:

> urbe est nostra mitior Aulis
> et Taurorum barbara tellus.
> hospitis illic caede litatur
> numen superum.
> ciuis gaudet Roma cruore. *Oct.* 978–982

> Our city is crueller than Aulis
> and the barbaric Tauric land.
> There the killing of strangers
> appeases the gods.
> Rome revels in citizen blood.

De-authorising Nero: Octavia *and the* Aeneid

Octavia does not just pit one version of Senecan governance against another, then: it also stages that conflict as the activation of different textualised identities within the Senecan corpus, making 'Nero' a real life tyrant who uses language to make his own world. But *Octavia* also reacts to another way in which the imperial script merges 'myth' and 'history', for it recognises Caesarian identity as constructed within and by epic: above all in the *Aeneid*, aetiology not just for Rome but also for 'Augustus', the teleological endpoint and symbol of empire without end, *imperium sine fine* (*Aen.* 1.279). The *ignotus* is again exploiting a relationship that Seneca has already constructed with Augustan epic, for his drama is saturate with subversive allusion to the Julian foundation text.[12] And again, the *ignotus* presses this tendency into more explicit service in his own play, as the imperial marriage at the heart of the drama is now re-imagined as the chaotic and confusing Carthaginian episode of the *Aeneid*. In place of the legitimating ambition of the Augustan epic, the dynastic imperative of the *Aeneid* will now be monstrously internalised within the imperial court.

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12 See Schiesaro (2003), esp. 207–208: 'Senecan tragedies question the discursive assumptions on which the *Aeneid* was built, and shatter any optimistic ideals that it may have nurtured.'

The *Aeneid* constructs Roman identity through an unsettling but successful combination of alliance and violence, as Aeneas leaves behind the passionate but dangerous relationship with Dido to make a dynastically secure partnership with Lavinia, and legitimates the accession of Augustus through divine ancestry.[13] *Octavia* contracts this oscillation of bloodline and bloodshed to the imperial house itself. Bracketing the current phase of the regime, the choral odes which start and end the play chart the fortunes of imperial women who gain power for their sons only to later suffer at their hands (*Oct.* 273–376; 924–957), while the play's action examines an imperial family that has imploded. In the creation of family ties (Nero is both brother and husband to Octavia, son and lover to Agrippina) and their violent dissolution (*Octavia* includes reference to the intra-familial murder of Messalina, Claudius, Britannicus, Agrippina and proleptically Octavia herself), *Octavia* writes Nero's divorce of Octavia as the final, concentrated episode in a cycle of alliance and violence that is born in the origins of Rome itself, fusing the mythology and 'reality' of Rome's ruling family.

The similarities go far beyond the typological. *Octavia* plays Nero's accession as the first love-scheme of Venus in the *Aeneid*, for the process of disguise, substitution and impersonation that we find in Cupid's usurpation of Ascanius' place in the royal court at Carthage (*Aen.* 1.657 ff.) is replicated in Rome itself, when the 'grafted-on Nero' (*Nero insitiuus*, 249) supplants the true son of Claudius, Britannicus, at the behest of a power-hungry Agrippina.[14] Venus' plan had been that Cupid, disguising himself as Ascanius, should fill Dido with the poison of love ('Deceive her by trickery and, a boy yourself, put on the recognisable features of a boy [...] breathe a hidden fire into her, and deceive her with poison': *falle dolo et notos pueri puer indue vultus* [...] *occultum inspires ignem fallasque ueneno*, *Aen.* 1.684–688): Nero, taking Britannicus' place, has a more literal *uenenum* to use, which permanently removes his rival double.[15] Instead, in a way that points to Octavia's status as the 'true' heir of the Julian line, it is the eponymous heroine who ought now to be playing 'Aeneas', as her own words of self-encouragement

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13 On the *topos* of the rightful heir in *Octavia*, cf. 179–180, 277–281, 533–535: on Virgilian play on blood (shed) and blood (line) see e.g. *Aen.*7.98–99, 7.318, 12.838–839 with O'Hara (1990) 63. Toll (1997) and Syed (2005) examine the construction of Roman identity in the *Aeneid* (Syed specifically through comparison with Carthage).

14 Nero's Cupid-like quality has been recognised—see Williams (1994) and Boyle (2008) ad. 806 and 820—but Britannicus too, his 'face like the winged god's', *uultus deo / similes uolanti* (172), is Cupid-like.

15 Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.16.

reveal: *grauiora tuli. / dabit hic nostris finem curis / uel morete dies* ('I have endured worse. Today will end my own distress / Be it by death,' 652–653·), an obvious remodelling of Aeneas' exhortations to his own men after the storm of *Aeneid* 1: *o passi grauiora, dabit deus his quoque finem* (*Aen.* 1.199: 'You too have suffered worse things: god will give an end to these too').

Indeed, it is conspicuous that Octavia, though she is about to be deserted, never paints *herself* as an abandoned 'Dido'.[16] That role is left to Agrippina once again, who is not just Venus, but also, appropriately enough, Dido: not just mother but lover, a redoubled role encapsulating the iterate and entangled nature of the imperial family. Dido's curse that Aeneas should meet an early death, alone and unburied (*Aen.* 4.620) looks back to her own claims that she took Aeneas in when he was 'cast up on the shore, in need' (*eiectum litore, egentem* ... *Aen.* 4.373), and plays into Agrippina's promise that Nero will soon die abandoned and alone:[17]

> ueniet dies tempusque quo reddat suis
> animum nocentem sceleribus, iugulum hostibus
> desertus ac destructus et cunctis egens. *Oct.* 629–631

> The day and time will come when he repays
> His crimes with guilty soul, throat bared to foe,
> Deserted, destroyed—utterly destitute.

In Agrippina, the imperialist mother whose love for her son is more than maternal, we may see the literal face of what is a disquieting meeting between Venus and Aeneas at Carthage, in which mother and son reprise roles suitable for potential lovers.[18] One striking verbal repetition strengthens this intertextual relationship, Agrippina's wish that her *paruulus* son had not even been born (636), but that the foetus had remained 'pressing close to me' in the underworld (*iunctus atque haerens mihi*, 639). Irresistibly reminiscent of Dido's wish for a 'little Aeneas' (*paruulus* ... *Aeneas*, *Aen.* 4.328–329), the *ignotus* neatly articulates the fusion of Agrippina's sexual and maternal desires through the Virgilian intertext.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the author of the *Octavia* cements the identification of Nero's own family with the legendary founder of the Julian *gens*—and his own drama with the foundation text of Augustan

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16 Octavia's Nurse attempts to paint her charge in such terms—see e.g. her instruction to the heroine to 'restore the collapsing house of your father' (*labentem ut domum / genitoris*, *Oct.*180), a clear echo of Dido's lament that her own house is collapsing (*domus labentis Aen.*4.318).

17 On this passage and the actual circumstances of Nero's death see Kragelund (1982).

18 On these roles at Carthage cf. Oliensis (1997); Hardie (2006).

Rome—when he redeploys one final and significant marker of that family's connections with the *Aeneid*. When Nero himself recalls his ancestor Augustus' success in civil war, he claims

> condidit tandem suos
> iam fessus enses uictor hebetatos feris
> uulneribus, et continuit imperium metus *Oct.* 524–526
>
> The victor now,
> Exhausted, finally sheathed his sword dull
> From brutal blows; fear maintained his power.

The use of *condere*, with its connotations of foundational violence and its significant place at the climax of the *Aeneid*, is no accident.[19] Its application to the fate of Agrippina, who, according to the chorus, invited her murderer 'To sink the vile sword in her womb' (*utero dirum condat ut ensem*, *Oct.* 370), cements the connection, combining as it does this anti-foundation with the role of Senecan Jocasta.[20] The author of *Octavia* has rewritten the imperialism of the *Aeneid* as inward-turning and incestuous tyranny.

Re-authorising Nero—Constructing Identity with the Bellum Civile

Octavia's Nero, a 'self-constituting' character, is then in turn written into imperialist literary tradition through a nexus of associations with the *Aeneid*, resulting in a stereoscopic vision of Julian power: the founder-hero of the *gens Iulia*, and its debased endpoint in one form. But if, on a reading based on the *Aeneid* and seen through Octavia's eyes, the tyrant is no more than a 'grafted-on' Nero (*Nero insitiuus* 249), the emperor himself offers an alternative vision of the propriety of his rule, and his manner of rule, rejecting the Julian identity associated with Augustus and the governance-by-mercy espoused in Seneca's *De Clementia*. Instead, Nero makes the Caesarian power as imagined in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* as his own blueprint and foundation-text for rule, reflecting on what it is to be 'Caesar' by recasting history—and the 'rules' of Caesarian *imperium*—through the lens of Lucan's anti-Augustan aetiology of the rise of the Principate.

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19 As Boyle (2008) ad. 524–526 points out. On *condere* in the *Aeneid*, see James (1995).

20 Cf. Sen. *Oed.* 1038–1039; and Tac. *Ann.* 14.2, 14.7–9. On *condere*, see also *Oct.*733 and 752 f.: used by Poppaea of a dream that Nero killed her, her Nurse interprets that dream as a sign of stability: *iugulo quod ensem condidit princeps tuus, / bella haud mouebit, pace sed ferrum teget* ('Your prince's sword buried in a neck means / He'll wage no wars but sheath his sword in peace.').

De Clementia marks a new line in the sand for Roman political thought.[21] The *clementia* that Republican Rome had displayed to foreign enemies and that had been re-packaged by Julius Caesar to win over opponents in civil war has become in Seneca's treatise a vital quality at the heart of new imperial governance, a virtue through which a collapse into the chaos of civil war is to be avoided. Eschewing traditional Republican examples of 'mercy', and distinguishing clearly between Augustus' remarkable clemency *post* civil war and the murderous exploits of his youth, Seneca focuses on Augustus, and the particular example of his treatment of Cinna, as a model of restraint and good governance Nero must emulate (*De Clem.* 1.9.1–12).[22] A conspiracy which has made Cinna in Augustus' eyes not just a foreign enemy (*hostis*) to Augustus, but even a parricide (*parricida*), is nonetheless forgiven, and Seneca goes on to argue that this policy does not just have practical results—the loyalty of Cinna, no further conspiracies—but that there are added benefits to the exercise of the virtue, namely popularity and the treatment of *princeps* as god (*De Clem.* 1.10.1–4). Yet even as it evokes Augustus as the exemplary standard by which the new *princeps* must be judged, *De Clementia* constantly juxtaposes the *princeps* with the 'Augustus' pre-Principate, a murderous, angry, and sometimes cruel figure.[23] *De Clementia*'s tendentious version of the rise of the Principate thus leaves room for Nero not only to emulate but also to exceed the example of Augustus.

Octavia's Seneca does not just reprise *De Clementia* in his advice to Nero—he also takes this selective approach to the example of Augustus further, when he entirely skips mention of Octavian's rise to power to make the claim that Augustus, a god now, found his route to heaven through the suppression of his father's enemies:

Illum tamen Fortuna iactauit diu
terra marique per graues belli uices,
hostes parentis donec oppressit sui *Oct.* 479–481

Yet Fortune long tossed him on land and sea
Among the harsh vicissitudes of war,
Until he crushed his father's enemies.

21 Griffin (2000) 542–543 and Braund (2009) 30–51 summarise the historical associations of *clementia*; on Seneca's selective approach to memory and history in *De Clementia*, see Gowing (2005) 74; for Augustus in *De Clementia* with *Octavia*, Manuwald (2002) 119–121.

22 On the *exemplum* of Augustus for Nero more generally, Champlin (2003) 138–144.

23 Text and translation of *De Clementia* is from Braund (2009).

This language is heavily loaded ideologically. Not only does Seneca recycle the repetitious *terra marique* motif of Augustus' own claims to achievement in his *Res Gestae* (3.1, 4.2, 13), a reminiscence of the success 'his' Augustus has *already* reflected upon in *De Clementia* (*postquam terra marique pax parata est* 1.9.4), but he also implicitly asserts the Aeneas comparison (*ille et terris iactatus et alto*, 'that man tossed on land and sea', *Aen.* 1.3). *hostis* was the term used by both sides in the civil war to package their conflict as *bellum externum*; Lucan's Julius Caesar is particularly adept at imposing such an 'alienating' ideology on his opponents, while Augustus' post-Actium *clementia* famously exempted the murderers of Julius Caesar, deemed enemies of the state.[24] So when *Octavia*'s Seneca completes his partial remembrance of Augustus' career with the claim that his victims were 'the enemies of his father', *hostes parentis*, he packages the civil conflict from 43 BCE to Actium as not just filial duty but also the targeted elimination of foreign enemies of the state, exploiting the legitimating rhetoric of Augustus himself in a way that goes far beyond *De Clementia*. The positive characterisation of Augustus by *Octavia*'s Seneca reveals the self-constructing forms of identity through which the first *princeps* asserted power.

Octavia's Nero shows himself no less astute a constructor of imperial identity when he rejects Character-Seneca's version of an Augustan 'Golden Age' of leadership (*Oct.* 477 f.) and reactivates the civil war past so overtly deplored in *De Clementia*. To rule 'according to the example of Augustus' (*ex Augusti praescripto*, Suet. *Ner.* 10.1), Nero suggests, is not to make *clementia* the bedrock of government, but civil war, for Augustus was always a vicious despot who secured power, and then deification, through violence rather than mercy.[25] Character-Seneca can try all he likes to assert the importance of family loyalty, stressing that Nero should not 'condemn his kin without cause' (*Nihil in propinquos temere constitui decet*, *Oct.* 440): Nero shows precisely how well he has understood what it is to be 'Caesar' as he, to the horrified disbelief of the Prefect, repackages the entire Roman people as 'enemy of the state': *Extinguere hostem maxima est uirtus ducis*, 'A prince's greatest virtue is killing foes' (*Oct.* 443), and will later neatly re-classify Octavia herself as just such an external enemy (*Oct.* 864 f.).

Nero's evocation of the foundation of the Principate, which goes on to stress the blood spilt in the process (*Oct.* 503–526), asserts that the

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24 The phrase is from Roller (2001) 15–63: see esp. 54–63. On the use of *hostis* in civil war see Jal (1963) 77–78. Nero will be hoist by his own petard, the first emperor to be officially declared *hostis* by his Senate: see Suet. *Ner.* 49.2 with Bradley (1978) 277–278.

25 Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.9–10.

monumental bloodbath of civil war ceased only through *exhaustion* at intra-Roman slaughter: 'At last the weary victor sheathed the sword / That battle-blows had blunted' (*condidit tandem / suos iam fessus enses uictor hebetatos feris / uulneribus*, *Oct.* 523–525). Nero does not just pointedly revise the sense of *condere* here for anti-Virgilian effect: he also links Augustus' approach to rule with an earlier civil war narrative, recalling Lucan's 'take' on civil war and the exemplary warrior Scaeva, who fights until his sword wears out: 'And now his sword-point, blunt and dulled by clotted blood / has lost the function of a sword and smashes limbs without a wound': *iamque hebes et crasso non asper sanguine mucro /*[*percussum Scaevae frangit, non vulnerat, hostem;*] */ perdidit ensis opus, frangit sine vulnere membra* (*Luc.* 6.186 f.).[26]

Octavia's Nero has been reading Lucan: his conception of the role of *princeps* fuses what he has been taught by Seneca with the aggressive tyranny of Lucanian Caesarism. The Scaeva example has yet more force when we recall Seneca's conclusion to the Cinna *exemplum*:

> Ego uero clementiam non uoco lassam crudelitatem; haec est, Caesar, clementia uera, quam tu praestas, quae non saeuitiae paenitentia coepit, nullam habere maculam, numquam ciuilem sanguinem fudisse; haec est in maxima potestate uerissima animi temperantia et humani generis †conpraenditte sibi mor†; non cupiditate aliqua, non temeritate ingenii, non priorum principum exemplis corruptum quantum sibi ciues suos liceat experiendo temptare, sed hebetare aciem imperii sui.

> But personally I would not call it clemency to be tired of cruelty. Real clemency is what you exhibit, Caesar, and it does not arise from regret of savagery. It consists of being flawless, of never having shed a citizen's blood. Real clemency, in a position of supreme power, consists of the most real control of the mind and ⟨of an all-inclusive love⟩ of humankind ⟨as love of oneself⟩, of not being corrupted by any desire or by natural impetuosity or by the precedent of earlier emperors into experimenting to see what liberties it can take against its fellow-citizens, of blunting the edge of one's own power.
>
> *De Clem.* 1.11.2

Nero's nod to Lucan's Scaeva does not just re-activate a notion of Caesarian rule through civil violence—it also leads the audience back to Seneca's less than glowing recommendation of Augustus' early behaviour, and what in Nero's eyes seems absurd advice to a Caesar—the dulling of one's *imperium* through *lack* of action against one's own people.[27] Nero deploys Lucan, in

[26] The text of Lucan is Shackleton-Bailey (1988): all translations are from Braund (1992).

[27] Cf. *Oct.* 456, 461 and 527 for further examples of Nero's enthusiasm for the sword with Boyle (2008) ad loc., and cf. *De Clem.* 1.11.3 (in a context which once again stresses that Nero shows good rule by *not* wielding the sword).

other words, to undercut Seneca's equally tendentious attempt to establish 'the' story of Caesarian identity. For Nero, the lesson is clear. Seneca got it wrong when he promised divinity by clemency (*De Clem.* 1.10.3): 'Stars await us, too, if my savage sword / Pre-empts all attacks upon my person / And I secure my house with worthy sons.' (*Nos quoque manebunt astra, si saeuo prior / ense occuparo quidquid infestum est mihi / dignaque nostram subole fundaro domum, Oct.* 530–532).

The Scaeva-*exemplum*, combining Lucanian allusion with the ideology of tyranny, is matched by another *exemplum* inspired by *De Clementia*. The tyrannical antitype to Augustus there is Sulla (*De Clem.* 1.12.1–2): *Octavia*'s Nero once again turns the tables to establish Augustus not as opponent of such rule, but continuator of civil war in that tradition. Nero's opening remark, *Quantum cruoris Roma tunc uidit sui, / lacerata totiens!* ('How much of her own blood Rome witnessed then / From countless wounds!' *Oct.* 503–504), reminiscent of Lucan's Sulla, who drained the blood from a similarly personified Roma (*Luc.* 2.139–143),[28] affirms that Augustus' rise to power merely continues a cycle grounded in Republican history. And though we cannot know to what extent the *ignotus* is relying on Livy's account of the proscriptions, it is clear that here Nero articulates the civil war careers of Julius and Augustus as a reiteration of the conflict between Marius and Sulla in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*:[29] Nero's gory depiction of severed heads impaled on the Rostra, trickling putrefaction and desecrating the Forum (510–514), must recall the scene conjured by the anonymous old man who reflects on that past phase of Roman conflict in which the heads of the leaders, borne on the javelin, were carried through the trembling city and piled up in the middle of the Forum (*Luc.* 2.160–162, 166–168).[30] Making these heads, the object of the gaze of sad *patres* ('Senators', but also 'relatives') who could not openly display their grief, Nero once again synthesises the Sullan era with the violence of Augustus' ascent to power, for the language of the suppression of mourning, and the institution of proscription in itself, was a Sullan 'invention' and ever after associated with that name.[31]

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28 As Ferri (2003) ad loc. notes.

29 Radicke (2004) examines the influence of Livy on Lucan: at 200–207 he argues that Lucan may be using an abbreviated version of Livy at the beginning of *Bellum Civile* 2. Other possible Lucanian influence is noted in both Ferri (2003) and Boyle (2008) ad loc.

30 Note too Caesar's own imagined decapitation, pre-Pharsalus (*Luc.* 7.304–305).

31 Dio specifically brackets the slaughter in and at Rome in the proscriptions of 43 with the name of Sulla (47.3; 13.4), and comments that many who lost their lives were condemned because they were mourning victims of the proscriptions (Dio Cass. 47.13.1–2; cf. 33.109.15–16).

Nero's evocation of Augustus' rise to power thus enforces the suspicion that the Nero of the *Octavia* is sensitive enough a reader of Lucan to understand—and act on—the lesson of the digression from *Bellum Civile* 2, on which his own account of the Caesars and future behaviour in the play is based. Lucan's old man narrated in an attempt to find pertinent comparisons for the civil war between Pompey and Caesar, 'seeking a precedent for his mighty fear' *magno quaerens exempla timori* (*Luc.* 2.67): by infusing his speech about the career of Caesar in language that brings that conflict back to its roots, Nero shows he has learned and reversed the lesson Lucan gives us in his *Bellum Civile*—that the history and *exemplum* for his own rule lies not in the post-republican *clementia* of Augustus, but in the unceasing conflict stretching back to the massacres of the Sullan era.

Nero is not just playing tyrant when he argues with Character-Seneca, then: he is systematically dismantling the various literary and ideological scripts on which past imperial identity has been authorised. The insolence with which he counters Seneca is matched by his own approach to Lucan's epic, for he has harnessed an anti-imperial cry of anguish—what David Quint has termed 'the epic of the lost Roman republic', a poem that 'gives back to the vanquished republicans their story of resistance and keeps that story alive in historical memory'[32]—and used it to cement his own imperial identity and stranglehold on power.[33] The *princeps* goes so far as to steal outright one of Lucan's best lines, for Nero's 'The world rocked with the might of generals', *concussis orbis uiribus magnis ducum* (*Oct.*518)—a summary of the slaughter at Philippi and Naulochus—clearly appropriates Lucan's proem: *certatum totis concussi viribus orbis* / *in commune nefas*, 'conflict waged with all the forces of the shaken world / for universal guilt' (*Luc.* 1.5). Likewise, Nero's rendition of the climax to Octavian's civil war—the death of Marc Antony—has an irresistibly Pompeian ring, as once again (*iterum*) history repeats itself when Egypt serves as the site for the death of anti-Caesarian opposition:

hausit cruorem incesta Romani ducis
Aegyptus iterum, nunc leues umbras tegit.
illic sepultum est impie gestum diu
ciuile bellum. *Oct.* 521–523

See esp. Henderson (1998) 16–17 with his translation of Velleius' remark at 2.66.1: *Sullani exempli malum: proscriptio*: 'Evil a là Sulla: proscription'.

32 Quint (1993) 133.

33 On historical Nero's attempted devaluation of the Republican past see Gowing (2005) 98–99.

> Again incestuous Egypt drank a Roman
> Leader's blood and now entombs weightless ghosts.
> Interred there was a civil war long waged
> With all impiety.[34]

The imagery of 'ghosts entombed' enacts the formula of funerary epigram, but there is special resonance in the designation of Antony's shade as 'light', punning on the 'weightiness' of the live Antony in political as well as physical terms.[35] Famously too, of course, Pompey's crucial and defining feature in Lucan's epic is his status as *umbra*-in life, merely the shadow of his formerly great self: *stat magni nominis umbra* ('He stands, the shadow of a great name', *Luc.* 1.135).[36] *Bellum Civile* 8 treats in extended form Pompey's transition to literal *umbra*, lamenting the notoriously shabby burial his body was afforded,[37] and linguistic traces of Lucan's burial-scene leave their mark in Nero's version of the death of Antony:

> tunc, ne *levis* aura *retectos*
> auferret cineres, saxo compressit harenam,
> nautaque ne bustum religato fune moveret
> inscripsit sacrum semusto stipite nomen:
> 'hic situs est Magnus.'
>
> Placet hoc, Fortuna, *sepulchrum*
> dicere Pompei, quo *condi* maluit illum
> quam terra caruisse socer? *Luc.* 8.789–795

> Then to stop a gentle breeze uncovering / and carrying off the ashes, with a rock he presses down the sand, / and to prevent a sailor's interfering with the grave by fastening / a mooring-rope, he inscribed the sacred name with half-burnt stick: / 'Here lies Magnus.'
>
> Are you happy, Fortune, to call this / Pompey's tomb, in which his father-in-law preferred / he should be buried rather than have no funeral at all?

Nero's revisionist history thus asserts his own 'civil war' against his people as appropriately *ex Augusti praescripto*, collapsing distinctions between

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34 The echo of Lucan's own mention of the incestuous Ptolemaic queen comes in a context which explicitly compares Mark Antony with Julius, in its description of that Caesar's union with Cleopatra (*Luc.* 10.68–81).

35 As Boyle (2008) ad loc. notes: on *umbram tegere* and epigram see Ferri (2003) ad loc.

36 On the significance of this phrase in Lucan see Feeney (1986) 239–243.

37 Cf. *Luc.* 8.843–845: *satis o nimiumque beatus, / si mihi contingat manes transferre revulsos / Ausoniam, si tale ducis violare sepulchrum*, 'enough and O too greatly blessed / if it were my luck to tear up the remains and bear them / to Ausonia, to violate a general's so-called tomb'.

Augustus, Julius Caesar, and Sulla, re-forming progressive teleology and the distinction between Republican chaos and Imperial order as degenerate cycle of repetition. In short, Nero deftly elides all the considerable distance Seneca has attempted to construct between his own idea of a new *clementia*-based ideology of rule, re-interpreting his own imperial identity out of a template for rule informed and mandated not by pro-Augustan exemplary material (*Aeneid*, *De Clementia*) but by the tyrannical power of 'Caesar' found in *Bellum Civile*.

It is in *Bellum Civile*, too, that Nero has found inspiration for his own new 'twist' on a Caesarian identity with respect to *clementia*. Augustus' display of *clementia* to all but those who murdered his father was a modification of an approach to rule famously utilised by Julius Caesar as a new 'method of conquest' (*ratio vincendi*), deployed strategically against enemies as part of a policy of reconciliation and reintegration after the *ciuilis dissensio*.[38] But *Octavia*'s Nero is quite sure that *clementia* killed Caesar, for as he points out, Brutus killed the master of the universe, the man who had saved him: 'Caesar—fell to a foul citizen crime' (*Caesar nefando ciuium scelere occidit*, *Oct*. 492–502). This is a mistake that he will not repeat: spotting the weak-point in Caesarian power, Nero determines that he will not fall into the same trap, but instead will take the role of 'Caesar' to its natural endpoint, an end in which his new theories about the application of *clementia* will fuse with the literalization of the tyrant-persona he has theorised.[39]

At the beginning of the fifth act Nero returns to soliloquise again, furiously railing against the people who have risen against his marriage to Poppaea. Nero now is not just talking about ruling like an Atreus: he has become Atreus, turning the Senecan tyrant's self-reproaches against inertia in *Thyestes* into a plan of revenge against the Roman people.[40] Amidst self-imprecations to act and predictions of punishment by fire—a clear allusion to the Great Fire of 64—Nero comments once again on the perils of *clementia*. And once again, the prism of *Bellum Civile* is crucial, for Nero combines the language of tyranny with the concept of *clementia* in

38 On Caesar's 'ideological reconstruction' of the civil war see Roller (2001) 54–56; on Augustus' emulation and avoidance of Julian *clementia* see Dowling (2006) 38 and *passim*.

39 Of course Lucan refers to Julius Caesar and his successors by one name: see Henderson (1998) 177, 195–196; Roller (2001) 37–38.

40 Ferri (2003) ad *Oct*. 820–821 provides detailed references, comparing the scene with *Thy*. 176–204; see too Boyle (2008) ad *Oct*. 820–843, who notes that '[t]he overall effect of these allusions is to image Nero as a Roman 'Atreus', a monstrous archetypal tyrant, driven to excessive, inhuman revenge.'

a way which recalls the Julius Caesar of the Neronian epic. While besieging Corfinium, Domitius' own troops give their commander up to Caesar, and that noble demands death, only for Caesar to recognise—and refuse—this wish (*Luc*. 2.509–518), with the remark 'Live, against your will, and by my generosity / look upon the light of day. Be now a bright hope to the conquered side, / a proof of my behaviour', (*'vive, licet nolis, et nostro munere' dixit / 'cerne diem. victis iam spes bona partibus esto / exemplumque mei'* … *Luc*. 2.512–514).

Caesarian *clementia* here is revealed for what it is—a facsimile of the injustice dispensed by tyrannical Atreus, who declares *perimat tyrannus lenis: in regno meo mors impetratur* ('Let the soft tyrant kill: in my kingdom, let death be begged for', *Thy*. 247 f.).[41] Domitius, with his threatening glower (*vultu* … *minaci*), looks like the tyrant here, but it is Caesar's brand of forgiveness that marks him out as the *rex*, as Domitius very well knows.[42] Yet even as *Octavia*'s Nero replays the defining moment of Caesarian *clementia* / tyranny in *Bellum Civile*, he distances himself from it, declaring that 'death is too light a punishment' not just for individual citizens, but for the Roman people *en masse*:

> O lenta nimium militis nostri manus
> et ira patiens post nefas tantum mea,
> quod non cruor ciuilis accensas faces
> extinguit in nos, caede nec populi madet
> funerea Roma, quae uiros tales tulit.
> admissa sed iam morte puniri parum est,
> grauiora meruit impium plebis scelus. *Oct*. 820–826

> O too, too gentle the hands of my guards, / Too mild my wrath for this iniquity! / No citizen blood quenches the torches / Lit against us, no mass slaughter soaks / Funereal Rome, mother of such men. / For their crimes death is too light a penalty, / The rabble's impiety merits far worse.

Nero repeats to reverse Julius' version of rule, which conducts civil war through *clementia*: now, Nero will wage civil war in peacetime, against an ungrateful mob who are unable to grasp *clementia* or endure peace. Rolando Ferri suggests that Nero's mention of *cruor civilis* must be understood as *cruor ciuium*: 'not "blood shed in a civil war", but "blood of one's own fellow-citizens", caused to be shed by some other reason than civil war'.[43] But Nero's

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41 Cf. also Sen. *Aga*. 993–995.

42 Such an expression is common to *Octavia*'s Nero: see Boyle (2008) ad. *Oct*. 21–22; Ferri (2003) 435–436; and cf. *Oct*. 22 and 109 f. (Octavia on Nero); 436 (Seneca on Nero).

43 Ferri (2003) ad loc.

own words and deeds collapse such distinctions: enacting the lessons he has learned from Lucan's Caesar and Seneca's *De Clementia*, he has come to play out a vision of Caesarian rule predicated on constant civil war against his own people, a world in which the imperial script-writer Nero has decreed that now to be Roman is to obey the will of the *princeps*, broken by pain and fear (*fracta per poenas metu / parere discet principis nutu sui*, *Oct.*842–843).

Nero does not just harp on *clementia* here to present 'a more humanly intelligible leader', or to play ironically on the 'pointlessness of the behaviour advocated in the *De Clementia*':[44] Nero, Atreus incarnate, has identified *clementia* as integral to Caesarian identity and, fusing this recognition with the cyclical and degenerate impulse of an Atreus, whose aim is always to repeat the crimes of ancestors with amplification, he has constructed for himself a role for 'Caesar' that brings the Julio-Claudian dynasty to its self-destructive endpoint, an end which is found in its civil war beginnings.[45]

Tragedy as Civil War

Nero, then, articulates a vision of the world in which to be Caesar *truly* is to exercise anti-*clementia* against the entire Roman people, worked through rejection of imperial scripts represented by the *Aeneid* and *De Clementia*; and by a willingness to re-inhabit an extreme Lucanian Caesarianism in which *imperium* and tyranny are synonymous. Nero's approach to rule is clearly horrifying. Yet the *ignotus* presses independently the sense that his 'Lucanian' conception of the universe is not necessarily a misapprehension on Nero's part. This play offers no providential divine apparatus to give direction and succour to our heroine, and the eventual punishment that is promised for Nero lies outside of the play's dramatic scope.[46] But the *ignotus* does in fact offer a different cosmic dimension to the action of the drama, emphasising a confused interaction of *Fatum* and *Fortuna* which robs this story of the teleological drive and determinism imperial nar-

44 Boyle (2008) ad loc.

45 On awareness of past crimes and Atreus' desire to outdo his ancestors, see e.g *Thy*. 23–29, 267–277 with Schiesaro (2003) 130–131.

46 The prophecy of Agrippina (593–645) *does* promise retribution to come, but the manner of her appearance and the force of her words as revenging Fury suggest that, like the ghosts of Senecan tragedy, Agrippina's role is to perpetuate *nefas*, not end it. See Mazzoli (2000) 216–219; on the complicated cosmos of Senecan tragedy see Rosenmeyer (1989); Boyle (1997) 32–56 and *passim*.

ratives demand, and attributes to *Fortuna* in particular a prominence that makes *Octavia* quite distinct from the corpus of texts it imitates in other respects so dogmatically.[47] Such a combination is, however, distinctly Lucanian.

Bellum Civile notoriously replaces the divine apparatus with an ambiguous combination of chance and destiny, *fatum* and *Fortuna*.[48] Caesar is characterised from the outset as a figure who will not bow to the Stoic necessity of *fatum*, but will be following *Fortuna*: a startling inversion of Seneca's exhortation that one should submit to Fate but stand up to the tests of *Fortuna*, and a move that is clearly in sympathy with Nero's general attitude to Senecan philosophy in the *Octavia*.[49] Julius Caesar programmatically declared his allegiance to Fortuna before crossing the Rubicon at the outset of the epic: 'Here I abandon peace and desecrated law; Fortune, it is you I follow' (*'hic', ait 'hic pacem temerataque iura relinquo; / te, Fortuna, sequor'*, *Luc.* 1.225–226). When Nero once again asserts his authority as a 'worse-than-Julius' in claiming *Fortuna nostra cuncta permittit mihi* ('My fortune permits me everything' *Oct.*451), the *ignotus* collaborates in Nero's self-scripting as a 'worse-than-Julius Caesar', for his Nero is not content to follow *Fortuna*, but pushes the limits of her favour to find the boundaries to his own rule: 'It is spineless not to know one's power' (*Inertis est nescire quid liceat sibi*, *Oct.* 453).[50]

The *ignotus* thus puts a self-aware Nero into a literary universe which reinforces his construction of himself as 'worst Julius', harnessing *Fortuna* to wage war against his own people. Octavia, for her part, is written as Pompey to Nero's Caesar. Recognising that Nero 'cannot cope with his good fortune' (*Oct.* 90)—a phrase also applied to the tyrannical Alexander[51]—Octavia is in this play not to triumph against Caesar, but to be destroyed by him, submitting to the fate the tyrant orders for her. And while she talks like a Senecan heroine, consciously attempting to follow in the footsteps of Medea and Electra,[52] she is allusively condemned to Pompey's fate, as

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47 As Boyle (2008) lxxiii and ad *Oct.* 36, 82 rightly notes. On fortune in the *Octavia* also see Wilson (2003) 67–70.

48 Cf. Bramble (1982) 539; Dick (1967); Ahl (1976) 280–301; Feeney (1991) 250–301; Long (2007).

49 Cf. e.g. Sen. *De Prov.* 4.12; 5.8. On this in *Bellum Civile* see Ahl (1976) 278–301.

50 Cf. Boyle (2008) lxxiii and ad *Oct.*451.

51 Cf. Ferri (2003) ad loc.

52 On Senecan tragic precedents for Octavia see Boyle (2008) ad loc.; more generally on Octavia's comparison with Greek tragic figures, esp. Electra, Cassandra and Iphigenia, see Harrison (2003).

she herself acknowledges: *nunc in luctus seruata meos / magni resto nominis umbra*, 'Now living for my tears I'm left, / The shadow of a great name' (*Oct.* 69–70; cf. *Luc.* 1.135).[53]

The final scene of *Octavia* capitalizes on this characterisation to write its heroine as doomed to the same end as her Lucanian forebear, as the heroine's repeated hopes and threats to change the course of history by killing her tyrant husband finally give way to acceptance of her fate.[54] Though Octavia has spoken out defiantly against the Nurse who urges her to 'submit to fate and fortune' (*cede fatis atque fortunae tuae Oct.* 252), the final act begins with her acknowledgement that she has no control over events: '*Quo me trahitis quodue tyrannus / aut exilium regina iubet* …' ('Where do you drag me? What exile / Do the tyrant and queen dictate …?' *Oct.* 899–900). Such a submission to fate must recall the decision of Lucan's Pompey before his own demise, when he 'yields to Fate […] and chooses to prefer death to fear' (*sed cedit fatis … / … letumque iuvat praeferre timori, Luc.* 8.575–576).[55] And when Octavia recognises her doom, declaring *Me quoque tristes mittet ad umbras / ferus et manes ecce tyrannus* ('The rabid tyrant will send me, too, / Look! to grim blackness and the dead', *Oct.* 958–959) she once again speaks in words that echo a Lucanian past, plotted by the Egyptian Pothinus—a past in which Caesar *could* have died:

> nox haec peraget civilia bella
> inferiasque dabit populis et mittet ad umbras
> quod debetur adhuc mundo caput. ite feroces
> Caesaris in iugulum … *Luc.* 10.390–393
>
> This night will end the civil wars / and give the people divine offerings to their dead and send down to the ghosts / the head which still is owing to the world. Fiercely attack / Caesar's throat …

The author of *Octavia*, no more than Lucan, is able to make such 'counterfactual history' come true.[56] Instead, Octavia's Pompeian fate is sealed, and she bows to the inevitability of her end: 'Rig the ship, spread sails to wind / And sea; let the helmsman set course / At last for the Pharian coast' (*Armate ratem, date uela fretis / uentisque, petat puppis rector / tandem Phariae litora terrae, Oct.* 969–971). Most editions of *Octavia* print *Pandatariae*

[53] Mazzoli (2000) 211–212 discusses Octavia's status as living *umbra*.

[54] For further association with Octavia and 'Pompeian' language see Boyle (2008) ad *Oct.* 26.

[55] Cf. Boyle (2008) ad loc.

[56] Henderson (1998) 187.

litora terrae for v.971, sacrificing metre and manuscript authority for the security of the later account of Tacitus, who asserts that this is where the princess was exiled (*Anns*.14.63.1).[57] But there is a fitting finality about Octavia's self-proclaimed Egyptian destination, driving the Lucanian infused plot to its natural end: Octavia's own death, like Pompey's, will take place on the Pharian shore in this new version of tragic civil war history, as the potential collapse of Julian power in Republican and Neronian texts finds its degenerate endpoint in the incestuous land of Egypt.

The very last lines of the play provide a depressing—and strikingly un-Senecan—coda. The citizen-chorus provides a context for not just for Octavia's last moments through reference to the example of Iphigenia, but also for Rome itself, condemning their *patria* as the last word in barbarity:

> urbe est nostra mitior Aulis
> et Taurorum barbara tellus.
> hospitis illic caede litatur
> numen superum.
> ciuis gaudet Roma cruore. *Oct.* 978–982

> Our city is crueller than Aulis / And the barbaric Tauric land. / There the killing of strangers / Appeases the gods. / Rome revels in citizen blood.

In the final, pessimistic words of *Octavia* are the opening sentiments of Lucan's epic, lamenting Rome's desire to fight itself when so many foreign enemies remained unconquered (*Luc*. 1.21–23). Here too is final confirmation of Nero's world-view (*Oct.* 503) and rejection of Seneca's *clementia*-based and idealised Rome.[58] The Julio-Claudian Principate ends in its beginning, presided by over a Julius who does not solve the 'problem' of civil war with *clementia*, but confirms his Caesarian identity with civil war against his own people and wife: a kin-conflict that replays the Julio-Claudian Principate as cycle of *nefas*, to be purged only with the death of its last emperor. It is not quite enough, then, to say that the author of *Octavia* 'allows' Nero to construct himself as the degenerate and debased endpoint of an era, articulating a version of Caesarism kept under wraps. Rome herself must accept a measure of the blame, as tragedy and history fuse. If the aim of *Octavia* is to exonerate Seneca from culpability in the Neronian regime, then it fails: on this reading of the play, the truly horrifying fact that the *ignotus* unveils is that Nero gets imperial identity *right*.

57 See the compelling argument for the retention of the *A* reading in Boyle (2008) ad loc.
58 Boyle (2008) ad loc. notes specific recollection of *De Clem*. 1.25.1 here.

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NERO CAESAR AND THE HALF-BAKED PRINCIPATE

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This paper derives from work in progress: a general assessment of the 'job' of Roman emperor. Viewing the imperial office from the perspective of the Late Empire, I am particularly interested in the weaknesses of the Augustan Principate: what brought it down and necessitated a new, or at least radically altered, system of imperial government from the late-third century. Having constructed a general model of the working of the high Principate, I am currently testing this against the behaviour of individual emperors—beginning with Nero. Here, I first develop Miriam Griffin's suggestion that Nero may be represented as the victim of circumstance: by personality utterly unsuited to run a system that was itself so raw that it was hardly yet a system—my 'half-baked' Principate.[1] Then, however, I propose a different way of representing 'Nero's' reign.

Nero was pitched at a young age into a very difficult job, and so immediately found himself under strain. However, the greatest challenge of this job was not its basic responsibilities. Throughout history, other young monarchs (for example, Henry VIII) have successfully faced as much or more; and today, presidents, prime ministers and the chief executives of major companies operate under equal or greater stress. Rather, the difficulties of the position of *princeps* stemmed from what Griffin terms its 'unresolved contradictions'.[2] There remains an inclination among Roman historians, especially those working forwards in time from the late Republic into the Julio-Claudian period and beyond, to think of the Principate as an institution that was established under Augustus and then ran more or less steadily to the third century. As a result, when they analyse it they adopt a synchronic approach.[3] This produces useful insights, but full understanding of what was

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[1] Griffin (1984) e.g. 83–87, 188. As will become clear, I rely heavily on Griffin's work, and the more so having spent so long outside this period.

[2] Griffin (1984) 187.

[3] E.g. Millar (1977); cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 285: '… we have moved away from study of the Principate as a political system to study of administrative hierarchies.'

going on also requires diachronic analysis, because the Principate was subject to evolution. In particular, at its inception important elements of the Roman metropolitan political nation were able to accept it only by perceiving it as the Republic 'restored', under the protection of the current head of the Julio-Claudian *domus*, Augustus. A second, associated, early conceit was that the restored Republic needed protection because it was still convalescing after the trauma of the civil wars of the late first century BC. But convalescence implied recovery: one day it might be fully re-instated and no longer need a protector. A third, later but consistent, conceit was that, in the meantime, if the Julio-Claudians failed or disappeared, the head of another *domus* might legitimately assume the role of protector and director of the state. The result of all this was that for a number of leading senatorial families the early Principate was an awkward hybrid: a monarchy that was not monarchy, kingship that was not kingship.

Because Augustus derived his authority from the Republic, he must defer to the Republic. Such deference guaranteed the existence of the Senate and, more important, of the 'senatorial tradition', by which I mean acceptance of the pre-eminence of Republican history and of Republican institutions, as represented by senators, meeting in the Senate. This impeded the emergence of true monarchy. The constitutional clock was re-set at the beginning of each reign, as Gaius, Claudius and Nero each vowed to follow the model of Augustus.[4] Yet, other than in the minds of senatorial conservatives, in Rome itself and throughout the Empire, the *princeps* was readily accepted as a monarch. Thus there was strain: when dealing with the conservatives the *princeps* had to veil his monarchical position. This required enormous patience and strength of mind, and left Nero with little chance of long-term success. He was young and inexperienced. Furthermore, though there are clear objections to the historian—clinically unqualified and relying on minimal evidence—playing the amateur psychologist,[5] one cannot help but feel that Nero is a classic example of the unhappy combination of defective nature and nurture. Suetonius notes the mercurial temperaments of the Domitii Ahenobarbi;[6] and there can be no doubt that, even allowing for the habitually neglectful parenting of aristocratic societies, Nero experienced an unusually disturbed childhood, after Gaius turned on his surviving sisters, including Nero's mother, Agrippina II, in AD 39.[7] It is therefore not

[4] Wiedemann (1996) 222, 232.
[5] A point recalled from Joyce Reynolds' Cambridge lectures of 1967.
[6] Suet. *Ner.* 1–5.
[7] Barrett (1996) 63–70.

surprising that, after a promising start, Nero soon demonstrated that he was unsuitable for the tasks demanded of him. He liked acting but, growing bored with the difficult role of *princeps*,[8] chose another part, that of the amateur, then professional, sportsman and entertainer: in modern terms, that of the 'celebrity'.[9] From an early date it must have become clear that his was going to be no straightforward or easy principate.

One may examine this principate in many ways. Here I explore the implications of Nero's training for the job. It is a remarkable feature of the Principate, underlining its irregularity and nominal impermanence, that there was no early and direct contemporary politico-philosophical explanation, definition or justification of the office of *princeps*.[10] One result of this was a dearth of technical terms describing the operation of the Principate (e.g. the lack of a word for 'usurper'), making the institution even more difficult to grasp. So how was Nero prepared for office? Despite, perhaps because of, his domestic problems, Nero seems to have enjoyed his boyhood education, for he subsequently raised two of his freedmen tutors, Beryllus and Anicetus, to high office. That he was well educated is reflected in his choice of men such as Lucan and Petronius to be his close companions.[11] However, he will, of course, have been educated as a senator, so the historical and ideological models presented to him were those of the old Republic, not the new autocracy. After Agrippina married Claudius in AD 49, she handed Nero over to Seneca for final polishing. *Prima facie* this appears very promising. Seneca was a renowned orator and Stoic philosopher, and a senator. Furthermore, Agrippina, characteristically practical, directed that in instructing Nero Seneca should avoid philosophy.[12]

The way seems open at last for Nero to be given a sound grounding in the modern Principate. But this did not happen. By virtue of his equestrian background, a newcomer to the Senate, with an influential younger brother (M. Annaeus Mela, father of Lucan) who notoriously chose to remain equestrian, and himself apparently preferring the company of equestrians to senators, Seneca seems to have had little feeling for the senatorial tradition or interest in the routine business of the House.[13]

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[8] Griffin (1984) 94.

[9] Cf. below p. 159.

[10] Pliny the Younger's treatment in his panegyric to Trajan is indirect, circumspect and tendentious: Hekster (2002) 18–19. Dio's 'Maecenas debate' (52.1–40) is more sophisticated, but is late and anachronistic: Crook (1996) 71.

[11] Griffin (1984) 32, 143.

[12] Suet. *Ner.* 52; Griffin (1984) 32.

[13] Griffin (1984) 78–79.

Though he wrote Nero's accession speeches, in which he promised a return to the Augustan Restored Republic,[14] he did not teach Nero to understand or work with this Republic. Two great opportunities were lost: for a first-rate mind to analyse the Principate and to use this analysis to form the *princeps* to be; and, after Nero's accession, for Seneca to act as his permanent representative in the House—his prime minister.[15] Instead, Seneca, playing on Nero's taste for satire, appears to have encouraged him to mock the system. Nero's eulogy of Claudius, written by Seneca, may itself have mocked the deceased.[16] Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, written soon after the accession, directly ridiculed Claudius's deification. This attack may have been even more pointed if, as some have suggested, the *Apocolocyntosis* was in part a parody of Nero's accession promises to the Senate, also drafted by Seneca.[17] Thus encouraged, it is not surprising that Nero made 'party jokes' about Claudius.[18] All this was very risky. In jeering at Claudius, Nero showed that he failed to understand both how he had come to power, and what sort of power it was that he held.

There was worse to come. When Seneca eventually came to compose a treatise directly advising Nero on how to be a ruler, the *De Clementia*, he offered him a wholly inappropriate model of behaviour. The work was probably written a year or so after Britannicus' death, to assure people that Nero was still ruling according to Augustan principles. However, it hardly squares with the programme of AD 54, instead projecting Nero as a Hellenistic king.[19] Though it is extremely unlikely that Seneca ever went so far as to demolish the intellectual case for the Augustan Principate,[20] he gave more than a nod and a wink to monarchy, paving the way for Nero's later interest in other, even more extreme, autocratic foreign models.[21]

Seneca is unlikely to have acted out of mischief or malice. For all his faults, he was a philosopher and, as many have remarked, in pointing Nero to kingship he was simply being realistic.[22] Nero as *princeps* was the chosen of the human race, vicar of the gods, the arbiter of life and death. He was

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14 Tac. *Ann.* 13.3–4; Dio Cass. 61.3.1.
15 Cf. Griffin (1984) 93.
16 Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.1; Barrett (1996) 147.
17 Griffin (1984) 40.
18 Suet. *Ner.* 33.1; Dio Cass. 60.35.4. Griffin (1984) 45, 96.
19 Bradley (1978) 73; Griffin (1984) 77–78, 94–95, 172.
20 Wiedemann (1996) 242–243.
21 Cf. Champlin (2003) 107–110 (Periander).
22 Griffin (1984) 77–78; Wiedemann (1996) 242–243.

supreme; his power could be tempered only by *clementia*.[23] As the powers of Roman aristocrats had increased, clemency had necessarily come to feature as an important political virtue. Caesar became renowned for it; and the Senate had quickly voted Augustus a golden shield specifically celebrating his *clementia*, along with his *virtus, iustitia* and *pietas*.[24] The trouble was that while the Roman political nation was ready to accept virtuous princes, it was not yet ready for open monarchy. Overall, Seneca must be regarded as a disastrous influence on Nero. Although, as we shall see, there is a case for not simply dismissing Nero as a typical tyrant, Dio is right in characterising Seneca as the 'tyrant-teacher',[25] in the sense that he never taught Nero to be *princeps*.

Seneca failed to teach Nero adequately to deal with the situation in which he found himself, but this does not signify that Seneca misunderstood the Principate. On the contrary, as noted, he composed the first crucial speeches that allowed Nero to win over the Praetorians and the Senate. This shows that he had a sensitive and practical perception of the system, even if he did not believe in it. He was not alone. Examination of Nero's reign reveals many who demonstrated the same understanding, but who took the Principate seriously and were determined to keep it working. The most obvious are the principals in the drama of Nero's fall in AD 68;[26] but there were also those who, in 58, persuaded him to turn down an over-excited Senate's proposal of perpetual consulship,[27] and those who, early in AD 66, mindful of the need for an heir, managed to persuade him to marry Statilia Messalina while he was still mourning Poppaea Sabina. Statilia herself deserves credit: she was the one who had to put up with Nero in his deranged anguish.[28] With such people about, it is not surprising that Nero's empire was, in fact, remarkably well-run. In AD 54, the potentially awkward and dangerous transfer of power from Claudius to Nero, including the exclusion of Britannicus, was managed without a hitch. The new regime was immediately accepted by the political nation, and in the period AD 54 to AD 55 was able to confirm its authority. Between AD 56 and AD 59 it survived the necessary sidelining, then murder, of its main architect, Agrippina II, now become a threat. In the meantime, in the period AD 54 to AD 63, it

23 Sen. *Clem*. 1.1.
24 *Mon. Anc*. 34; Crook (1996) 79.
25 61.10.2: *tyrannodidaskolos*.
26 See below p. 169.
27 Tac. *Ann*. 13.41.
28 Cf. Dio Cass. 63.13.1–2.

successfully dealt with a major foreign crisis in Armenia and a major provincial rebellion in Britain (despite the fact that in Britain Rome had to endure early defeat at the hands of a woman, and in Armenia suffered huge humiliation with the capitulation of Paetus in AD 62). In AD 62 the regime also survived the disappearance of Burrus and Seneca and a tricky divorce and marriage, and in AD 65 the death of Poppaea. In the middle of all this, it weathered major domestic disaster, material and moral, in the shape of the Great Fire of AD 63; and it foiled the Pisonian conspiracy, a huge metropolitan scare, in AD 65. Apart from its last days, the principate of Nero may, indeed, be regarded as lucky. After the murder of Agrippina and Octavia, the great Fire, the Pisonian conspiracy, and the consequent run of executions and banishments, it could conclusively demonstrate that the gods were still on its side. For, from AD 64, following the agreement of an armistice in Armenia, it could announce world-peace;[29] and in AD 66 it enjoyed the consequent propaganda coup that was Nero's magnificent reception of king Tiridates in Rome, projected as an entirely successful settlement of the Armenian dispute. 'Universal peace' was soon broken by a second provincial revolt, in Judaea in 66, but all the indications were that this would be dealt with as effectively as the first. Admittedly, from AD 64 there had been some manipulation of the gold and silver coinage, which some have seen as reflecting difficulties caused by high government expenditure.[30] On the other hand, there was no general fiscal collapse, and others have interpreted the monetary changes as no more than 'reform'.[31] By the end of 66, therefore, when Nero went off to Greece, the regime appears to have perceived no sort of crisis. Crisis was forecast in AD 67, and came in AD 68, the year of disaster for Nero and the Julio-Claudian dynasty. But even then there are strong hints that both might have survived if Nero had taken more decisive action—in particular by going in person to confront his enemies.[32]

This positive assessment raises many questions, in particular as to the extent to which Nero may be represented as being personally responsible for the success of the regime. I propose that his contribution was minimal.[33]

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[29] Suet. *Ner.* 13.2 and, of course, the famous coin legend of AD 65, *PACE PR TERRA MARIQVE PARTA*: Carson (1990) 16. Cf. Tac., *Ann.* 15.46.2 (on AD 64), 'a time of unprecedented peace' (*haud alias tam immota pax*).

[30] Wiedemann (1996) 252; below p. 167.

[31] Carson (1990) 14; Rathbone (1996) 317, 319.

[32] Cf. Griffin (1984) 181.

[33] *Contra* Griffin (1984) 40–43: Nero's early involvement in matters that interested him is not the same thing.

My inspiration here is Ted Champlin's portrayal of Nero as an obsessive: a man who, quickly tiring of the role of *princeps*, and seeking acclaim through singing, acting and sport, turned his entire life into a drama in which he was the sole star.[34] Lost in this drama, Nero helped create the traditional image of himself as a 'monster' by eventually (from AD 66) taking on stage roles that strengthened malicious rumours concerning his character and deeds.[35] Thus, for example, by playing the role of matricide, he revived the tale of his involvement in Agrippina's murder. Likewise, he kept alive his love for Poppaea, and the memory that he had caused her death and that of their unborn child, by having her acted by Sporus and, indirectly, by himself.[36] By the end, as Champlin remarks, though Nero was not insane, his devotion to his stardom had 'overwhelmed his sense of duty, indeed of reality'.[37]

If this is accepted, we may ask who actually ran the Roman Empire during his principate. In other words, instead of thinking how 'Nero' did this or that (as do all the ancient and most modern writers), we should investigate the participation of other agents. Who was available? I propose, very broadly:

1) Nero's court: wives and mistresses; praetorian officers; favourites and cronies.[38]
2) The household freedmen: powerful *liberti* inherited from the Claudian administration, and their successors.
3) Senior senators and equestrians.
4) Army commanders—the senatorial governors of the major border provinces.

This may be represented as a pyramid: Fig. 1.

All of these were important. The continuing significance of the Senate, for example, should not be overlooked. Although this body no longer determined policy, it still played a crucial role in implementing and interpreting

[34] Cf. Champlin (2003) 234: 'the increasingly audacious self-dramatization of an indefatigable artist and performer ....'

[35] For these roles (Alcmaeon, Canace, Hercules Furens, Oedipus, Orestes, Thyestes) see Dio Cass. 63.9.4, with Champlin (2003) 96–107. Cf. Champlin 132–135, on Nero and Apollo, as another example of Nero's using a grand role to explore and articulate his thinking: though not the god, he worked through the god.

[36] Dio Cass. 63.9.5.

[37] Champlin (2003) 81, 236.

[38] For contemporary acceptance of the concept of 'court' (*aula*) as a political institution see Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 283.

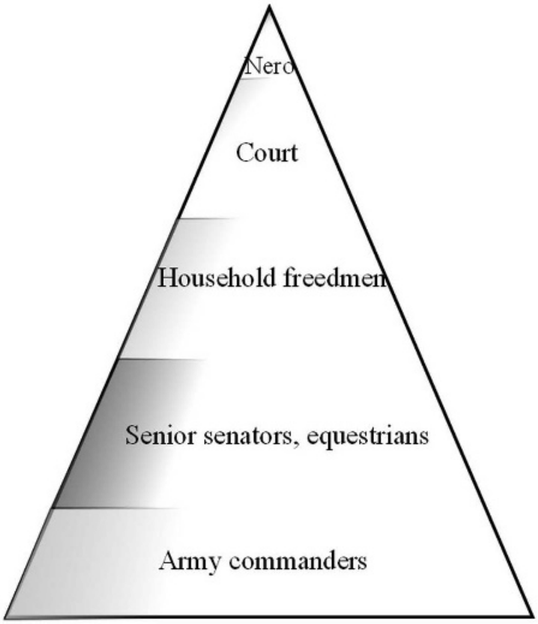

Fig. 1: The ruling hierarchy

it; and it still carried out much of the routine business of state.[39] The positive relationship established between *princeps* and Senate in AD 54—ironically by Seneca—bore fruit. Tacitus gives the strong impression that most issues that traditionally fell within their purlieu were handled as a matter of course by magistrates and senators, with only the most difficult cases being passed on to Nero and his ministers. This 'shadow of the Republic', as Tacitus sneeringly terms it,[40] lasted longer than one might think, given the common perception of 'Nero the monster'. In AD 61, when, following the murder of Pedanius Secundus by one of his slaves, the question of what to do about the rest of those in his household was discussed by the Senate, the jurist Cassius Longinus remarked upon changes in law and custom that had already been put to this body—no doubt including those of the time

39 Talbert (1996) 322: the Senate had '… a regular, active function to which significance was still attached'; also 336–337: 'In the spheres of legislation and jurisdiction the senate remained notably busy … it was the institution which continued to be seen as the permanent embodiment of the ancient *respublica*.'

40 Tac. *Ann.* 13.28.1 (*imago rei publicae*).

before Nero, but nonetheless making the current principate part of a long and continuing process.[41] Furthermore, as late as 65, following the failure of the Pisonian conspiracy and in the course of the first, targeted, round of prosecutions of those involved in it, Nero acted the outraged senator, defending himself in the Senate, and presenting a dossier of evidence to prove culpable sedition. And when, just as these persecutions appeared to have ended, one senator attempted to revive them, his peers persuaded him to desist. Nero's honouring of the consular, Petronius Turpilianus, and the *praetor*-designate, the future emperor Nerva, suggests that there were leading senators on his side throughout all this.[42] However, I propose that the most important—the three legs of the tripod that supported the regime—were:

1) The household freedmen. Our accounts of Nero's reign open and close with the activities of Helius;[43] and they are shot through with references to equally great *liberti*—Doryphorus, Epaphroditus, Polyclitus—and to lesser, but still highly significant figures—Anicetus, Acratus, Phoebus etc. At his death, Nero was attended only by freedmen: his *a rationibus*, Phaon, his *a libellis*, Epaphroditus, and Sporus. Such *liberti* were absolutely crucial, acting as the flywheel that kept the machinery of government running smoothly. An affront to ancient authors, and to modern writers taking their tone from these, they should neither be dismissed nor deplored.[44]
2) The senior field commanders, men such as Corbulo, Suetonius Paullinus, Vespasian, and Verginius Rufus. These were vital because they protected the Roman Empire from internal as well as external enemies: by keeping the provinces in check they supported the centre.[45]
3) The court. The role of the courtiers is less obvious, and perhaps contentious. I return to it below.

These three categories were not, of course, exclusive. *Liberti* and field-commanders might also be courtiers; and, as in the case of Polyclitus, *liberti* and field-commanders might even meet in the field.[46] It should also

41 Tac. *Ann.* 14.43.1.
42 Tac. *Ann.* 15.73.
43 Tac. *Ann.* 13.1.3; Dio Cass. 63.12.1–3.
44 Dismissed: Millar (1977) 77; deplored: Griffin (1984) 87–88.
45 Down to 68 these had no tradition of involvement in metropolitan politics: the military side of imperial dirty work was left to the Praetorians or, at a pinch, to the marines of the Misenum fleet.
46 Tac. *Ann.* 14.39.1.

be borne in mind that, as a result of family links, there were connections between freeborn and freedmen. The praetorian prefect, Nymphidius Sabinus, for example, was the grandson of Callistus, *a libellis* of Gaius.[47] Apart from personal success, what was it that this very mixed bunch of people cooperated to achieve? The answer must be, simply, political stability. Most freedmen and courtiers would not have desired regime-change, since a new administration might cost them dear, as the fate of Claudius' Narcissus, at the hands of Agrippina in AD 54, will have reminded them. The field commanders, with class memories of the horrors of the late Republic, will have wished to avoid civil war. The Pisonian conspiracy, metropolitan and basically non-military, was a clear attempt at regime-change without war. Piso's refusal, after its discovery, to raised armed rebellion against Nero, and the refusal of other senators, including Nerva, to have anything to do with it anyway, must likewise reflect dread of civil conflict.[48] Nero's accession will have brought great anticipation of long-term stability. Despite his ultimate failure, at the start he seemed more than capable; and his youth gave him plenty of time to produce the heir who would ensure the continuance of the dynasty and its supporters. Problems arose when he began to show his true mettle: when he began a series of 'break-outs'.

I do not consider as break-outs actions which are politically explicable and which often involved interested third parties. Such 'non-break-outs' comprise: from AD 55, the affair with Acte; from AD 58, Nero's relationship with Poppaea; in AD 59, the basic removal of Agrippina; in AD 62, the divorce from and death of Octavia, and the removal of Sulla and Plautus; in AD 64, the Great Fire (accidental); from AD 64, the basic need for a new palace; in AD 65–66, the first wave of persecutions and punishments related to the Pisonian conspiracy; and, in AD 66–67, the basic idea of a Greek tour. Rather, Nero's 'break-outs' were: from AD 54, the fact that he never showed himself as a military leader in the Empire; in AD 55, his panic at the news of Agrippina's supposed treachery; in AD 58, his proposal to abolish all indirect taxation; in AD 59, the theatricality of the first attempt to murder Agrippina, and Nero's failure to give her proper burial; from AD 60, his choice of Tigranes as king of Armenia; in AD 62, his petulant attack on Antistius, causing a revival of the *maiestas* charge; in AD 64, the Great Fire (Nero's crass recital to the flames, and his treatment of Christians); from AD 64, the

[47] Tac. *Ann.* 15.72.4; Plut. *Galb.* 9.1–2.

[48] Tac. *Ann.* 15.59,1–8, 72.2.

extent, untraditional location and extravagance of the *Domus Aurea*;[49] in AD 65, the manslaughter of Poppaea; in AD 65–66, the African gold fiasco and the second wave of post-Pisonian persecutions; in AD 66–67, Nero's conduct in Greece (acting the professional entertainer, behaving temperamentally, dressing in non-Roman fashion, marrying Sporus, playing women's roles, running the risk of mutilation and death in chariot-racing, and proving hard to recall to Italy); and in 68, his staging of an over the top, non-Roman, non-military triumph, on his return from Greece and his final disastrous direction of resistance to his enemies.

However, which is my main contention here, for a long time Nero could be managed. This returns us to the role of the courtiers. They had to keep Nero occupied and as much as possible out of affairs, and encourage him to produce an heir. Their job was the most difficult and dangerous of the three groups. It was made harder because, for all his faults, Nero was no fool. He demanded stimulation from those around him, which meant that his court was a centre of real politicking. We should not think of it as paralysed by crude 'tyranny'. Tacitus seems to indicate this in describing Tigellinus and Poppaea as comprising 'the emperor's privy council in his ferocious moods'.[50] But we should note the qualification 'ferocious', and appreciate that the period concerned, after the disclosure of the Pisonian conspiracy, was highly unusual. As Tacitus implies, and as is discernible elsewhere, down to this time court politics were more open textured. So, for example, Agrippina, popular with Praetorian officers, managed to retain an effective power-base even after the death of Britannicus. Attacked, she was able to better her enemies.[51] A related instance is Tigellinus' (which must also mean Nero's) inability to topple Faenius Rufus. Rufus had been appointed joint Praetorian Prefect with Tigellinus following the death of Burrus, in AD 62. However, while Tigellinus, as one of Nero's favourites and a crony of Poppaea, represented the new order, Rufus, closely associated with Agrippina, Seneca and Burrus, was a relic of the old. He should not have lasted long, but proved indestructible.[52] This suggests that Rufus had powerful allies; and indeed we are told that Nero felt obliged to appoint him in the first place because he was popular with the people and the

49 Cf. above p. 162; Drinkwater (2007) 72. Cf. below p. 168.
50 Tac. *Ann*. 16.61.4 (*saevienti principi intimum consiliorum*).
51 Tac. *Ann*. 13.18.3, 21.9.
52 Tac. *Ann*. 14.57.1; Dio Cass. 62.13.3.

Guard. He may also have had links to L. Antistius Vetus.[53] A particular issue of court-politics appears to have been the handling of the Armenian question. Corbulo went east ready to accept Tiridates as king, on condition that he accepted Roman suzerainty: with Vologaeses willing to negotiate along these lines an early settlement was in prospect. However, in the period AD 60–62 strategy shifted to putting Tigranes, a long-term hostage in Rome, on the Armenian throne.[54] When, in AD 62, Corbulo rejected Paetus' proposal to secure Tigranes' deteriorating position through a combined attack on Armenia on the grounds that he had received no orders to this effect from Nero,[55] this must have been pure casuistry. Paetus was newly arrived in the east, and Corbulo would have known that the idea had the *princeps*' blessing. Corbulo's obstinately turning a blind eye must reflect his confidence in friends at court.

There are also signs of political banter at court. This is hardly surprising. Nero was intelligent, liked satire, indeed used it to shape the perception of Claudius' reign,[56] and so to some degree must have been prepared to suffer it himself. Only this can explain his patronage of Petronius, certainly no yes-man.[57] Nor was Lucan, who, while no leader of 'literary opposition' to Nero, must, even before the disastrous break with his patron, have revealed his Republican sentiments in conversation with the *princeps*. He could well have referred to the tension between the theory of the restored Republic and the fact of the Principate: awkward for a ruler himself educated in the senatorial tradition.[58] The consular, Atticus Vestinus, may have done the same. Excluded by the Pisonians because they thought he might be an awkward champion of Republican liberty, he was still executed by Nero in AD 65. This sounds tyrannical, but in the circumstances Nero had a right to be suspicious, and the more so because he and Vestinus were once close. Nero had grown to dislike him because he was excessively strong-willed, knew Nero too well, and mocked him.[59] Similar badinage was, apparently, still possible late into Nero's reign, with Vatinius' 'I hate you, Caesar, for being of senatorial rank'.[60] An 'edgy' court will have been an interesting but perilous place.

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53 Tac. *Ann*.14.51.5–6; 16.12.1.
54 Tac. *Ann*. 14.26.1.
55 Tac. *Ann*.15.17.2.
56 Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 295.
57 Tac. *Ann*. 16.18.2; Griffin (1984) 143, 152.
58 Cf. Griffin (1984) 155.
59 Tac. *Ann*. 15.68.4.
60 Dio Cass. 63.15.1 (*synklētikos*).

Those closest to the ruler will have been most vulnerable. The skill and courage of Nero's supporting cast in this imperial soap-opera—Acte, Poppaea, Tigellinus etc.—should not be underestimated. They are traditionally disparaged,[61] but they did an essential job and deserve proper recognition.

I propose that identification and consideration of the 'tripod' offers a new perception of the power relationship of Nero's principate, which can be represented by tipping over the 'pyramid': Fig. 2. Here Nero does not direct his regime, but is protected and isolated by it. All this leads me to wonder whether Nero's obsessions with the circus, the stage and the *palaestra* were entirely of his own making. The best way to keep him out of trouble was to get him to do something that he liked, so the Establishment may have encouraged his interests.[62] Even Nero's infamous trip to Greece may not have been entirely his own idea. Rather than fleeing from danger into make-believe,[63] he could have been encouraged to move to where he might more easily be controlled. He had a habit of proposing foreign trips, and then crying off,[64] which suggests that he was not very keen on such adventures. His readiness to go to Greece sprang not so much from his interest in its culture as from his desire to win fame at its games.[65] He journeyed there in the autumn of AD 66, but, given his long and complex programme, which necessitated major changes in the established scheduling of events, the decision to go must have been taken much earlier, perhaps no later than late AD 65.[66] This was a time when, following the suppression of the Pisonian conspiracy and the death of Poppaea, there was a new court, directed by Tigellinus. It would have suited the Establishment to get Nero away from Rome to put an end to a second wave of prosecutions; and it would have suited Tigellinus to get Nero to himself to secure his position.[67] And, despite his aversion to foreign travel, it would have suited Nero because this was the period when, anguished at the loss of Poppaea and their unborn child, and perhaps seeking to explore emotions of guilt and redemption as patricide, fratricide, matricide, homicide and incestuous lover and to find

61 Cf. Griffin (1984) 100–104.

62 E.g. famously Tigellinus; but also earlier Seneca and Burrus (prompters and cheerleaders at the Juvenalia of 59): Dio Cass. 61.20.3; and the consular Cluvius Rufus: Dio Cass. 63.14.3.

63 Cf. Griffin (1984) 164, 179.

64 Tac. *Ann.* 15.36.1–5 (Egypt); Suet. *Ner.* 19.1–2, 42–44 (Alexandria, Caspian Gates, Gaul); Dio Cass. 62.22.4, 63.8.1 (Armenia, Ethiopia, Caspian Gates).

65 Champlin (2003) 54–55 ('In practice, his vaunted "philhellenism" was sharply limited.').

66 Cf. Bradley (1978) 139 (though at 129 proposing AD 64 as the date for the start of the preparations).

67 Cf. Dio Cass. 63.12.3.

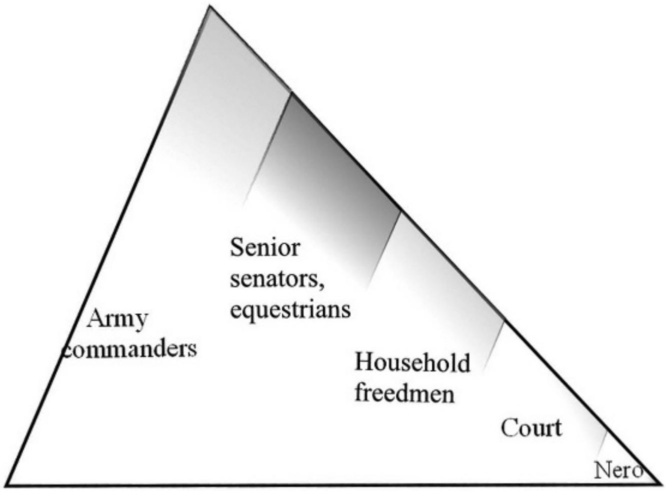

Fig. 2: The protecting hierarchy

relief in popular acclaim, he threw himself into tragic acting and public performance in other fields.[68]

The imperial administration, as ever, functioned very efficiently during Nero's absence; but such a situation could not persist. From the start, Nero had shown that he was capable of resistance. As he grew older, he would have become ever harder to handle. The more he was protected by being excluded, the more unpredictable he was bound to be when he insisted on acting on his own. And there was more. The absolute and inalienable powers of the *princeps* made him increasingly a political liability, as he lavished ever more time and money on his interests and, after the shock of the Pisonian (and then the Vinician) conspiracy, he lashed out at suspected enemies. The more of a liability he became, the more likely he was to be toppled, but still not necessarily in the way that he actually fell. The Julio-Claudian dynasty might have survived if Nero had produced a viable heir, and had then been removed. This would have suited the Establishment, and led to an interesting experiment with a minor *princeps* 150 years before Elagabalus, Severus Alexander and Gordian III which could have accelerated the evolution of half-baked Principate to proper monarchy. But this did not happen.

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[68] Champlin (2003) 55, 75, 79–83.

This is not the place to undertake a detailed examination of the reasons for Nero's fall. Suffice it to say that something was seriously wrong by AD 64. There is no strong reason to suppose that Nero was responsible for firing Rome, but the circulation of rumours of his guilt indicates growing public distrust of his character.[69] The specific issue which precipitated Nero's end was finance.[70] Debt and taxation were behind the Boudiccan and Jewish risings; and though Vindex's revolt was inspired by his adherence to the senatorial tradition, it appears to have been on the back of Gallic resentment at increased tax-demands.[71] Government shortage of money has also been detected, as we have seen, in changes to the coinage, in Tacitus' account of Nero's irrational anticipation of the re-discovery of Dido's treasure, and Pliny the Elder's problematic tale of his dispossession of six African landowners.[72] It is likely that Nero's regime would anyway have faced fiscal problems. The imperial tax system had major structural faults: its regular receipts were insufficient to meet major emergencies, and it was inflexible.[73] Claudius' principate had been careful but costly: in AD 54, there could have been few reserves.[74] Then came the expense of Nero's accession, in particular the donative to the Praetorians. There were further such donatives in AD 59, following the murder of Agrippina, and in AD 65, after the Pisonian conspiracy. Nero was also happy to play the role of generous state patron, in AD 57 giving 400 HS per head to the people of Rome, and providing a 40M HS subsidy for the state treasury (*aerarium*), and in AD 58 bestowing pensions on deserving aristocrats. As personal patron, he famously lavished gifts on his friends, in particular in AD 55, following the death of Britannicus. According to Tacitus, such liberality totalled 2.2 billion HS.[75] Nero was also notorious for his generosity to himself, sparing no expense in the giving of games, and organising grand public events. These included his reception of Tiridates in AD 66, which must have cost well over 300M HS,[76] and, of course, his post-Greece triumph. Like all rulers he had to deal with

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69 There is general agreement that the Fire and its consequences marked a major turning-point in the reign: e.g. Griffin (1984) 166; Wiedemann (1996) 250.

70 On this generally see Griffin (1984) 197–207.

71 Dio Cass. 62.2.1; 63.22.1a. Drinkwater (1983) 40–41.

72 Above p. 158; Tac. *Ann.* 16.1–3; Plin. *NH* 18.35. Bradley (1978) 185–186. Wiedemann (1996) 248, sees signs of fiscal stress from AD 62.

73 Cf. Rathbone (1996) 312: '… there flourished a defensive ideology of fiscal minimalism (no new taxes, no increases to old ones).'

74 Griffin (1984) 203.

75 Tac. *Hist.* 1.20; Bradley (1978) 167.

76 Champlin (2003) 227.

unexpected expenses and loss of income, most of all in the Great Fire of AD 64.[77] However, he greatly increased the cost of this by using the rare opportunity of free building-space in Rome to throw himself into his most unpopular object of personal expenditure, his new palace, the 'Golden House'.[78] It is therefore easy to conclude that the final fatal strain was a product of Nero's fecklessness: that 'the financial burden of Nero's generosity must have ultimately been unbearable'.[79]

But this is unjust. Many elements of this expenditure were necessary—and even, as in the case of Tiridates' reception, examples of political genius. And the elephant in the room, the expense that dwarfed everything else, was war. The Armenian conflict flared up at the very beginning of Nero's reign, and hostilities lasted until AD 63. There were immense movements of men and *matériel*. We have no idea of actual costs, but one significant statistic is that the slave *dispensator* (quartermaster-/paymaster-general) of the Armenian expedition was able to siphon off 13M HS to purchase his freedom.[80] Reckoning that this 13M HS amounted to between 0.1 and 1 per cent of the value of the money and goods passing through his hands, we may estimate these at 1.3–13 billion HS. Furthermore, if, following Roman tradition, this man needed three times 13M HS—to free himself, to pay off the debts he had accumulated in gaining his position, and to make his own fortune—we are looking at 4–40 billion HS as the basic (cash[81]) cost of the Armenian conflict. On top of this were the costs of campaigning in Britain, before and during the Boudiccan revolt; and, after AD 67, those of new operations in Judaea. All of this make Nero's personal expenditure only a minor part of the regime's total outgoings.

Understanding of the actual train of events which led to Nero's fall is greatly impeded by the lack of a precise chronology.[82] Here I make just one point related to what I have said so far about the imperial Establishment and the 'half-baked Principate'. I propose that Nero and his dynasty fell because one leg of the supporting political tripod buckled before any alternative strategy was available. This occurred when Nero lost the support

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77 Champlin (2003) 180.

78 Tac. *Ann.* 15.42.

79 Champlin (2003) 330. Cf. Griffin (1984) 205: 'the financial system can hardly be blamed for the fact that Nero inclined more and more towards the extreme example of Gaius, who had erected extravagance into a guiding principle.'

80 Plin. *NH* 7.129.

81 Cf. Rathbone (1996) 310: high cash expenditure was normally rare.

82 Wiedemann (1996) 261; the classic survey remains Bradley (1978) 254–258.

of two generals commanding western armies: Galba and Verginius Rufus. Both of these men are significant because, fully aware of the workings of the monarchy that was not a monarchy, they knew how to threaten Nero without necessarily precipitating civil war, by challenging his *auctoritas*. The power of the *princeps* derived from his possession of *imperium* (the power to command) and *auctoritas* (authority or—perhaps more understandable today—charisma). He obtained *imperium* from the Senate just before or at the start of his period of office, but his *auctoritas* had to be constantly renewed, through the constant approbation of his actions by Senate, people and army. Participation in this public approbation was a performance; and Nero, an avid performer, was acutely aware of those who failed in their duty in this respect.[83] This also explains the endless round of senatorial celebration of Nero's artistic successes.[84] If approbation ceased, a *princeps*' *auctoritas* would vanish, and his *imperium* could be challenged. Thus all that Galba and Verginius Rufus needed to do to shake Nero was to refuse to acknowledge that they were serving under his auspices, and to pass the issue back to the Restored Republic, represented by the Senate. Opportunity arose with the revolt of Julius Vindex, senatorial governor of Aquitania but of native stock, in spring AD 68. Galba, spurred on by Vindex, declared himself against Nero in the name of the Senate and people of Rome at the beginning of April AD 68, but set up his own, local, version of the Senate to legitimise his position.[85] Verginius Rufus, however, then crushed Vindex in battle at Besançon, probably in late April or early May AD 68.[86] Debate over Rufus' actions and motives began almost immediately, and remains unresolved. My view is that he destroyed Vindex for Rome, not Nero. In the eyes of Rufus and his men, Vindex was a dangerous Gallic rebel, whatever his rank and stated aims and whomsoever he backed.[87] Verginius therefore removed him with no thought for the political consequences, for himself or others.[88] News of Vindex's death naturally devastated Galba. It should have cheered Nero, but it did not because Rufus, having rejected his troops' acclamation of himself as Augustus, did not celebrate Vindex's fall in the name of Nero but passed the choice as to who should be *princeps* (with the

83 E.g. (Thrasea Paetus) Tac. *Ann.* 14.12.2, 16.21.1, 27.3, 28.3–6, with Dio Cass. 61.20.4, 62.26.3; (generally) Dio Cass. 65.15.2.
84 Dio Cass. 62.29.1, 63.18.3; cf. 61.20.4 (Thrasea Paetus).
85 Suet. *Galb.* 10.2 (*instar senatus*).
86 Bradley (1978) 257–258.
87 Urban (1999) 59–61.
88 Drinkwater (1983) 42.

implication that it should not be Nero) on to the Senate.[89] It was news of Rufus' slow motion insurrection—betrayal by a man who, of equestrian stock, had only recently benefited from the regime's policy of opening up of military careers to men of talent—that spelled Nero's end.[90] Overall, the 'new boy', Verginius Rufus dealt with matters better than Galba, the grand old senator, whose Spanish 'senate' must have looked eccentric and suspect: the mark of the renegade. Verginius Rufus, much more respectably, batted the whole issue back to Rome, where the endgame was played out.

In Rome, other experts on the Restored Republic, or 'half-baked Principate', took over, as the two remaining legs of the tripod gave way. Second to go was the court. Nymphidius Sabinus, praetorian prefect with Tigellinus, sidelined his colleague, represented Nero's declaration of his intention to take flight to Egypt as desertion and bribed the Guard to abandon him. The last to go were the household freedmen who, as true bureaucrats, having at last accepted the need for regime change now ensured that it was carried out properly. We may reconstruct high political drama, as Icelus, Galba's freedman representative in Rome (commonly overlooked, but a massively important figure, whose actions allow a rare glimpse behind the scenes of the Principate) hammered out a cold blooded deal with Nero's most important *liberti*. Nero had to be killed. However, the murder could not be perpetrated in Rome, which was needed for the Senate to declare against Nero and for Galba, and to give Galba his *imperium*.[91] Nero's continued presence in the City, whether living or dead, might cause difficulties with the troops or the people. So his *a rationibus*, Phaon, and his *a libellis*, Epaphroditus, along with the ersatz Poppaea, Sporus, lured him out of the capital to a 'secret' place (clearly known to everyone who mattered) to do the deed.[92] This raises questions as to the validity of the view that by this time Nero had 'lost his nerve and effectively abandoned the administration of affairs'.[93] He may initially have believed that he was being helped to escape to a place where he might still challenge Galba.[94] But even then Nero could not just be killed out of hand. Execution might produce a martyr; and, knowing their half-baked

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89 Plut. *Galb*. 6.2.

90 *Contra* Wiedemann (1996) 260–261. On Rufus see Griffin (1984) 117.

91 Suet., *Ner*. 49.2: Nero received the news that he had been declared a public enemy only after he had reached Phaon's villa.

92 Perhaps it was Phaon and Epaphroditus who removed all Nero's attendants, including his German guard: cf. Bradley (1978) 275.

93 Wiedemann (1996) 261.

94 Cf. Bradley (1978) 273.

Principate (especially, the fate of Cassius Chaeraea, executed for the assassination of Gaius), those involved will have been aware that, even in what was still constitutionally a republic, regicide was imprudent. Therefore Nero was persuaded to kill himself: the 'half-baked *princeps*' was, to the end, the victim of the 'half-baked Principate'.

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